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Ben Moon MADE *the* SWITCH

For more than a decade, Ben Moon was a Canon DSLR shooter, but he was inspired to seek out a smaller and lighter system because he wanted something less cumbersome and obtrusive. The compact size and low weight are immensely helpful on mountain climbing assignments, and the low-key nature of a small camera works well in portrait situations when a daunting DSLR might “change the vibe.” A friend convinced Moon to try Sony’s a7 series on a shoot in Norway. Not long into the trip, Moon knew he was done with his DSLRs.

“We were all camping in the van one night,” he says, “when we didn’t have room to pitch a tent. And I just shot a few fisheye frames in the van with both cameras [the a7S and the Canon EOS 5D Mark III]. I shot maybe five or ten frames with both, compared them, and then put the Canon away.”

“I didn’t realize it was happening,” he says, “but I just got used to the system. We hiked the highest peak in northern Europe and I carried the a7R and a 24-70mm over my shoulder the entire climb. When I got home and picked up my Canon, I was wondering why the exposure wasn’t changing in the viewfinder; I was so used to the EVF. I realized over the course of that trip that I wasn’t taking the camera away from my eye. I wasn’t looking at the back of the camera, because I knew my exposure was on. I could have image review in the viewfinder and it would pop up if I needed it and I could just keep shooting. I was so much more immersed in what was happening.”

“The other thing I found out,” Moon adds, “was in checking focus for portraits. I could zoom into someone’s eye ten times and I didn’t miss any frames unless I was moving myself. I could zoom in and check for really crisp focus on their iris and snap a frame and I didn’t miss any moments that way. That’s one of my favorite projects, my portrait stuff, and to be able to know I had everything... At the time they didn’t have an 85mm that was native, so I had the A-mount lens adapted. And now that I have the 85mm Batis, that lens is blowing my mind. That, with the a7R II, come on.”

“I bumped up my quality,” Moon continues. “This boggled my mind. Here’s a camera where I don’t miss exposure, I don’t miss focus, and I’m cutting the weight and size of my kit in half. And you’re telling me, too, that I’m getting quality that is mind-blowing, latitude, and I have a camera that shoots 4K internal video? It’s a 43-megapixel camera, the autofocus is amazing... It just blew me away. This is the camera. It’s my everything camera.”



Ben Moon



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5 TIPS

I WOULD GIVE NEW PHOTOGRAPHERS

BY SCOTT KELBY

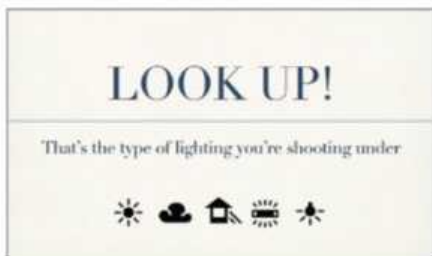
Here are five tips I wish somebody had told me when I first started in photography. Well, maybe not the first three. But that's only because that technology hadn't been invented yet.



1. SHOOT WIDE FOR MORE IMPACT

For most of us, the images we take today with our digital cameras and cell phones are headed online to places like social media and photography websites. When you post your photos, you want them to have the biggest impact possible. The secret to that is shooting wide. That's right. Keep your camera horizontal.

Don't turn it vertically and shoot tall because those tall shots will appear puny on the page. They'll look more like large thumbnails because of the way most websites are designed. Your tall image will only get around 40 percent of the space a wide image will, which means your tall image has only 40 percent of the impact.



2. FOR COLOR TO LOOK GREAT, LOOK UP

Some images look way too blue, yellow, or green. If your photos are falling into this category, you're one head movement and one button away from having perfect color every time.

The color of our pictures is controlled by our camera's white balance. Many photographers use a camera's auto white balance feature. This usually does a great job of producing great color, especially when shooting outdoors. But as soon as we walk over into the shade, everybody in our photo becomes a tint of blue. Or we walk into a restaurant and now the people in our pictures look really yellow.

The fix is easy. Just change the white balance setting on your camera to match the lighting you're shooting with a simple two-step process. Step one is looking up. If you look up and see trees above your head, you're in the shade. Step two is changing your camera's white balance to shade. Now you have perfect color.

If you look up and see clouds, change your white balance to cloudy. If you're in an office and you look up to find fluorescent lights, change your white balance to fluorescent. It's that easy. Don't forget to switch back to auto white balance afterwards, because it really does do a great job of getting you accurate color most of the time. But now you know what to do when it doesn't.

3. HOLD YOUR CAMERA REALLY REALLY STILL

I get more emails and questions about blurry photos than anything else. The main culprit is that we're literally just not holding our cameras still. If you're outside shooting in bright sunlight, you really don't have to worry about this. There's so much light that your camera will freeze just about anything, even if it's moving. But this changes as soon as you step into the shade or inside a restaurant.

Your camera needs to keep its shutter open longer when there's not as much light. Any movement during that time leads to blurry photos. Luckily, we have a few tricks for keeping our cameras still in lower lighting.

Tuck your arms and elbows in towards your body. This helps stabilize the camera. Then, stabilize your lens by putting your left hand under the lens to support and steady it. In really low light, try to lean against something like a wall or a column. Keeping your body still helps keep the camera still. If you try these tactics and you're still getting blurry photos, raise your camera's ISO setting. This will increase your camera's shutter speed until your images look nice and sharp.

4. HOW TO SHOOT IN LOW-LIGHT SITUATIONS

Here's a trick I use quite a bit, if I know I'm shooting in a low light situation. It works like a charm. Set your camera to shoot in burst mode. This is where you hold down the shutter button and your camera fires a continuous series of shots until you release the shutter button. So, let's say you hold it down in a low-light situation and it takes six or seven

continuous shots. Chances are most of them will be a bit blurry or even really blurry. But chances also are that at least one of those shots will be tack sharp. And all you need is one sharp shot to get it right.




5. ZOOM IN FOR PLEASING PORTRAITS

This last tip can make people in your portraits look their very best. The idea is based on the fact that wider-angle lenses may be unflattering to your subject because they can distort their facial features a bit. The wider the lens, the more they distort. You might not even realize this is happening until you see the difference of shooting someone with a long lens, like a 150mm or 200mm.

The compression and perspective of a long lens can be very flattering to your subject. So, the next time you're taking a portrait, use a zoom lens. Stand further away from your subject and then zoom in tight. You'll get a much better result with much less distortion.

THERE'S MORE WHERE THAT CAME FROM

Just by reading these tips, you've already gotten better at your craft. The good news is that you can keep going, with unlimited access to over 500 online classes at KelbyOne.com. We cover everything from landscape to travel photography. You can learn lighting for beginners or how to shoot sports and wildlife. There are tutorials that teach you how to use your particular camera and there are videos that help you compose your images like a pro.

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GRAB LIFE BY THE CAMERA.

A picture is just a picture. Until it's not. Because a picture can reach a point where it's worth more than any number of words. It doesn't matter how you try to describe it. You can talk all you want. At the end of the day, some pictures are just meant to leave you speechless. Take those pictures. Fuel your creativity.



Riders racing ostriches is a common sport in Africa. It's still not exactly clear how it arrived in Virginia City, Nevada. See more of Sol Neelman's "Weird Sports" images in this issue's "View."

PHOTO BY
SOL NEELMAN

When it comes down to it, photography is all about capturing light, but it's *how* you capture that light that makes a difference.

An image that's captured with a glass-plate process will look different than one that's captured digitally, even if a glass-plate filter has been applied. A photo that's captured with a 35mm full-frame sensor will look different than one that's captured with film. An APS-C digital sensor will create a different image than a Micro Four Thirds sensor, and so on.

Likewise, technique plays a huge part in a photograph. Take a body of running water and capture it at a high shutter speed, and you get an image with the water sharply frozen in place, but photograph that same waterfall with a slow exposure, and the water is silky smooth.

Digital Photo has always been dedicated to providing great information on both technique and gear, but I think this issue is especially full of great resources.

On the equipment side, we look back at the year with our Editors' Choice Awards, a collection of the best photography products from 2015. It was a vibrant

and product-full year, so there are a lot of great things in this guide, from cameras to lenses to software.

We also take a look at the new "connected camera" market, with a review of the new DxO ONE, Olympus AIR A01 and Sony DSC-QX30. These systems promise high-quality, go-anywhere shooting that bridges the gap between the sensors in mobile devices and those in fully featured cameras. This is a market that came out of nowhere and suddenly has three contenders, so we were especially interested to see how they stack up.

Jeremy Dunn is a photographer who has to capture images on the go—he shoots advertising campaigns for clients in the cycling market, so Dunn is often found on brutal climbs alongside his models or bombing down trails on a mountain bike. He has had to develop a workflow that uses compact digital cameras in the place of mirrorless or SLR gear, simply out of necessity. It's hard to capture images for a catalog cover when you have to keep at least one hand on the handlebars, so Dunn has turned toward powerful compacts.

Photographic gear, while powerful,

is often cumbersome, as evidenced by Dunn's shooting style, so we take a look at the workflow of DL Byron, a travel blogger who has worked for years on shaving pounds and cables from his travel kit. Byron shares his workflow with us, providing some good tips on how to increase productivity while reducing clutter.

We also have how-to articles this month on everything from nature photography to Photoshop retouching. As the father of a five-year-old, an especially important piece to me is Tracey Clark's "Bearing Witness," with photographer Jason Watts, which is about creating not just photos of your kids, but a lasting, touching tribute to them and your family.

This issue has me particularly excited to go out and shoot. As fall turns to winter, my weekends of capturing foliage give way to winter sports photography and my son frolicking in the snow. The holiday season brings with it new gear and new times to spend with family, creating images. I'll be mindful of the equipment I use and work with different techniques to capture moments in time.

—David Schloss, Editor
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Introducing Blackmagic URSA Mini, the lightweight Super 35 4.6K digital film camera with 15 stops of dynamic range!

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View

Sol Neelman is a veteran photographer, who worked at *The Oregonian* with a team that won the Pulitzer Prize for news coverage, and put more than a decade into “real” reporting. His work has been featured in magazines from *National Geographic* to *ESPN* to *Wired* to *Rolling Stone*, and he has shot for corporate clients like Nike, Adidas and eBay.

When I first met Neelman, he was working on a personal project, traveling around the world to cover “weird sports.” His first book *Weird Sports* was published in 2011 by Kehrer Verlag. I was struck by how comical, yet how poetic these shots were. The photographs are a tribute and a sendup at the same time, which is fine, as the people competing in a lot of these sports have a sense of irony.

Athletic competitions occupy a unique place in our lives—they help us define who we are as individuals and who we are as a community—and Neelman’s coverage of weird sports gets right to the heart of why we like to compete, and gets to the absurdity of competition. By abstracting contests that most of us know nothing about, he reveals how innately *human* participating in sports is.

You can find *Weird Sports* and *Weird Sports 2* on amazon.com. Visit Sol Neelman’s website at solneelman.com.

—DAVID SCHLOSS





LEFT: Weird Sports: The Dirty Dash. The Dirty Dash is a new kind of race, a mud run obstacle course where a “military boot camp meets your inner five-year-old’s fantasy.” One of the first tricky hurdles to overcome is a series of super-slick six-foot walls.

Canon EOS-1DS Mark III, Canon EF 35mm f/1.4L USM, 35mm at f/6.3, 1/1000 sec., ISO 320

BELOW, LEFT: Cupid Undie Run, Austin, Texas.

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L II USM, 28mm at f/3.2, 1/800 sec., ISO 640

BELOW: Extreme Barbie Jeep Racing involves adults racing toy vehicles down a dirt track.

Canon EOS-1D X, Canon EF 35mm f/1.4L USM, 35mm at f/6.3, 1/3200 sec., ISO 800



View

During Rally in the Valley, an annual off-road retreat in Arkansas full of races and stunts, a truck gets stuck while mudding and requires a tow.

Canon EOS-ID X, Canon EF 35mm
f/1.4L USM, 35mm at f/7.1,
1/2000 sec., ISO 400





ABOVE: Hundreds of warriors gather for playful combat at the annual Lightsaber Battle NYC.

Canon EOS-ID X, Canon EF 35mm f/1.4L USM, 35mm at f/1.8, 1/200 sec., ISO 4000

BELOW, LEFT: Utah Undie Run. Folks stretch out before the run to the capital building in Salt Lake City. It doesn't matter if it's before a marathon or an underwear run, it's always a good idea to stretch out first.

Canon EOS-IDS Mark III, Canon EF 35mm f/1.4L USM, 35mm at f/5.6, 1/200 sec., ISO 400

BELOW, CENTER: Prior to the 2015 Austin Gorilla Run, a group of runners takes center stage to be judged during a costume contest. The 5K fun run is a benefit for mountain gorillas.

Canon EOS-IDS Mark III, Canon EF 35mm f/1.4L USM, 35mm at f/1.6, 1/200 sec., ISO 800

BELOW: Costumed cyclists compete at the inaugural Clif Bar Cykel Scramble, a bike relay race held in the Bay area.

Canon EOS-ID X, Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L II USM, 50mm at f/10, 1/1000 sec., ISO 500





CANON 120 MP DSLR AND CINEMA EOS SYSTEM 8K CAMERA

Canon has announced the development of two new impressive cameras, a **120-megapixel DSLR** and the **Cinema EOS System 8K camera**. The Cinema EOS 8K enables input and output for 8K video content, plus 8K to 4K down-conversion and 4K cropping. The camera is being developed with a Super 35mm-equivalent CMOS sensor, as well as a body size that allows for outstanding mobility and increased levels of operability. Additional features include a frame rate up to 60 fps with 13 stops of dynamic range and a wide color gamut. Its EF mount will offer compatibility with most of the EF lens lineup. The Canon 120-megapixel DSLR will feature more than double the resolution of Canon's 50.6-megapixel EOS 5DS and 5DS R models, and will output RAW image files with a data size of 232 MB. With a high-pixel-density CMOS sensor, the camera will be compatible with most of the EF lens lineup. List Price: TBA. **Contact:** Canon, usa.canon.com.



27-INCH iMAC WITH RETINA 5K DISPLAY

Apple's October update to the 2015 iMac line makes the company's all-in-one desktop Mac even more powerful. While all the models now come with a 4K Retina display at minimum, the superstar is the new **27-inch iMac with Retina 5K display**, with a 3.1 GHz quad-core Intel Core i5 processor or 4.0 GHz quad-core Intel Core i7 processor. The iMac is available for the first time with up to 32 GB of onboard RAM and a 3 TB Fusion Drive, and it can be configured with up to 4 GB of video memory. List Price: Starts at \$2,299. **Contact:** Apple, apple.com.

PANASONIC LUMIX G 25mm F/1.7 ASPH

Compact and lightweight, the **Panasonic LUMIX G 25mm F/1.7 ASPH lens** for Micro Four Thirds mirrorless cameras has a 35mm equivalent of 50mm in full frame, and its *f*/1.7 maximum aperture enables enhanced low-light shooting and depth-of-field control. One ultra-high refractive index element helps achieve even illumination and sharpness for consistent performance throughout the aperture range, plus two aspherical elements reduce chromatic and spherical aberrations for enhanced clarity. A seven-blade diaphragm design provides smooth focus-blur bokeh. List Price: \$249.99. **Contact:** Panasonic, shop.panasonic.com.



TAMRON 16-300mm F/3.5-6.3 Di II VC PZD MACRO

A mega-zoom lens for DSLRs with APS-C sensors, the **Tamron 16-300mm F/3.5-6.3 Di II VC PZD Macro** features a versatile 35mm equivalent focal length of 25.6-480mm. Tamron's Vibration Compensation plus high-speed Piezo Drive autofocus mean you can go from wide-angle to long telephoto with sharp results. The lens has full-time manual-focusing capabilities, as well as enhanced support for contrast-detection autofocus. One UXR and four aspherical elements correct spherical aberrations and limit distortion, while one XR and two low dispersion elements reduce color fringing and chromatic aberrations in your images. List Price: \$629. **Contact:** Tamron, tamron-usa.com.



CANON EF 35mm F/1.4L II USM

Canon's new **EF 35mm *f*/1.4L II USM** is a pro-grade wide-angle lens for full-frame DSLRs ("normal" on APS-C cameras), featuring rugged construction, sealing against dust and moisture, and Canon's new BR (Blue Spectrum Refractive) Optics technology. BR uses organic matter developed by Canon that refracts short (blue) wavelengths to a greater degree than UD, Super UD and even fluorite for excellent reduction of axial chromatic aberrations. The 14 elements in 11 groups also include one UD and two aspherical elements. Rear focusing and Canon's Ring USM AF motor provide a minimum focusing distance of about 11 inches for a maximum magnification of 0.21X. The lens takes 72mm filters. Estimated Street Price: \$1,799. **Contact:** Canon, usa.canon.com.





THINK TANK PHOTO RETROSPECTIVE SERIES AND MIRRORLESS MOVER BAGS

A selection of new models has been added to **Think Tank Photo's** already versatile line of camera bags in the **Retrospective Series** and **Mirrorless Movers**. One of five models, the Mirrorless Mover 25i, for example, fits one medium to large mirrorless body, plus two to four lenses, an 8-inch tablet and additional accessories. Made from high-quality fabrics with YKK zippers and a magnetic closure, the bag features adjustable dividers to provide a customizable fit for different gear combinations. The Retrospective Series offers eight different models for a wide variety of camera gear and accessories. The Retrospective 30, for example, can fit two large DSLRs, plus 3 to 6 lenses, as well as a 10-inch tablet or 11-inch laptop. Think Tank Photo likes to call them old-school-style bags with new-school features. List Price: Retrospective Series (from \$129.75); Mirrorless Mover (from \$34.75). **Contact:** Think Tank Photo, thinktankphoto.com.



MINDSHIFT GEAR BACKLIGHT 26L

The **BackLight 26L** pack from **MindShift Gear** was designed to fulfill the needs of traveling outdoor photographers. The pack features a daisy chain, ice axe loops and additional lash points for increasing your carrying capacity. A padded waist belt and adjustable neck straps provide added comfort, along with webbing for attaching other accessories, and a tripod/monopod mounting system lets you attach a support on the front or the side. The pack also has high-quality YKK RC Fuse zippers, 420D velocity and 420D high-density nylon for long-lasting durability and strength, and interior mesh pockets for storing essentials. The BackLight 26L is compatible with MindShift's Tripod Suspension Kit, Filter Nest, Filter Hive and Switch Case. List Price: \$249.99. **Contact:** MindShift Gear, mindshiftgear.com.



APPLE iPhone 6S AND 6S PLUS

With **Apple's** release of the **iPhone 6s** and **iPhone 6s Plus**, what's of interest to photographers are the cameras on these phones. The primary cameras can shoot 12-megapixel photos, and autofocus and LED flash are included features. Each secondary camera shoots at 5 megapixels, and both phones now capture 4K video. The cameras include Apple's new innovative 3D Touch, which allows for controlling aspects of the user interface by pressing on the glass screen. The 6s display measures 4.7 inches, while the 6s Plus comes in at 5.5 inches. List Price: iPhone 6s (from \$649); iPhone 6s Plus (from \$749); also varies depending on carrier. **Contact:** Apple, apple.com.





GOOGLE NEXUS 5X AND NEXUS 6P

Putting an emphasis on the cameras, **Google** is releasing the **Nexus 5X** and **Nexus 6P**. The Nexus 5X features a 5.2-inch LCD display with full HD resolution. The front camera shoots at 5 megapixels, while the rear camera shoots at 12.3 megapixels, with an $f/2.0$ lens. Powering those images is a 2 GHz hexa-core Snapdragon 808 processor alongside 2 GB of LPDDR3 RAM. The 6P has a 5.7-inch display, with a front camera that shoots 8-megapixel images with a fixed $f/2.4$ aperture, while the back camera shoots 12.3 megapixels at an $f/2.0$ aperture. Both cameras can capture 4K video. List Price: Nexus 5X (from \$379); Nexus 6P (from \$499). **Contact:** Google, store.google.com.

DJI OSMO

An exciting addition to **DJI's** innovative line of products, the **Osmo** is a new handheld camera that lets you shoot 12-megapixel photos and 4K video while being stabilized by a 3-axis brushless gimbal, which the company designed for their self-stabilizing drones. The automatic Panorama mode allows you to shoot a 360° photo, while the advanced 3-axis stabilization system lets you shoot long-exposure photos and time-lapse sequences without a tripod. With the Osmo, you also can attach a smartphone and pair it with the camera in order to see what the camera is seeing and control it with a touch-screen interface. List Price: \$649. **Contact:** DJI, dji.com.



MANFROTTO XPRO BALLHEADS

The new **MXPRO-BHQ2** and **MXPRO-BHQ6** ballheads from **Manfrotto** are identical except the BHQ2 features Manfrotto's popular standard 200 PL plate and the BHQ6 sports the company's MSQ6PL plate, with the safe and secure Top Lock System. The units are made of strong, yet light magnesium alloy, and can support 22 pounds while weighing just under one pound. A new Triple Locking System employs three wedges to apply even pressure to the ball to hold it securely in place. Both units have 360° scales at the bottom and bubble levels. List Price: \$149.99. **Contact:** Manfrotto, manfrotto.us.



DATACOLOR SPYDER5PRO

You need your images to display precisely and accurately on-screen, as well as have your prints match those images; that means your monitor must be properly calibrated. **Datacolor's Spyder5PRO** is an easy and accurate way to calibrate, with the industry's only seven-detector optical engine and on-screen assistance to deliver color and shadow/highlight calibration in five minutes, and it takes just half that to recalibrate (preferably monthly) thereafter. An integrated room-light sensor alerts you when the ambient lighting conditions have changed, so you can recalibrate or adjust the ambient lighting. Estimated Street Price: \$189. **Contact:** Datacolor, spyder.datacolor.com.



GITZO TRAVELER TRIPODS

The new **Traveler tripods** from **Gitzo** feature Carbon eXact tubes that are significantly stiffer than the previous-generation Carbon X, thanks to High Modulus (HM) carbon fiber with larger tube diameters for improved performance without sacrificing weight. New Traveler G-lock technology makes possible taller tripods with a compact folding length. The tripods now include a short column for quicker switching to ground-level shooting and handy carrying straps. Four tripods are available, plus a Traveler Monopod. All can be purchased legs-only or as kits with Gitzo's new Center Ball Heads, which feature extremely good balance and tungsten disulfide coating for smooth operation and strong locking. An independent pan lock makes it easy to take panoramic photos. The GH1382TQD and GH1382QD heads are designed to fit seamlessly between the legs of the Traveler tripods. Estimated street prices range from \$289.99 for the Monopod with no head to \$1,099.95 for the Series 2 GT2545T tripod with GH1382QD Center Ball Head (this tripod extends to 60.8 inches, weighs 2.9 pounds and can support 26 pounds). **Contact:** Gitzo, gitzo.us.



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EDITORS' CHOICE AWARDS

This has been a phenomenal year for photography, with a seeming end to a global recession and a wave of new photographers entering the market, thanks to the popularity of social media. There are more energized, passionate photographers now than there ever have been. While we haven't seen the statistics validated, the Internet often cites a statistic that there are more photos taken every two minutes than were captured in the entire 19th century. And the gear is better than it ever was. Even an entry-level camera performs better in speed, image quality and capture rate than the top-end cameras in the early days of digital. Here's some of our favorite gear of 2015. This doesn't mean that gear not on this list isn't great, but these items stood out to us in the course of the year.



SONY a7R II

Sony released three new models of their a7 series in 2015, but the a7R II is the one we think is the most groundbreaking. Sony went back to the drawing board and created a brand-new sensor for this camera, one with a base ISO sensitivity that's vastly better than any other high-resolution camera. Built-in five-axis stabilization reduces shake with every shot, eye-detect focus locks onto an eyeball with remarkable precision, and WiFi transfer allows the a7R II to be part of a fast, wire-free workflow. (See "Travel Light To Shoot Smarter," page 44.) Price: \$3,200. Contact: Sony, store.sony.com.



NIKON D7200

The Nikon D7200 replaced the well-regarded D7100, using the same design as its predecessor, but with a much improved engine. We like to think of it as the Nikon D750 but with an APS-C sensor. This DX-sensor camera now captures 24-megapixel images at up to 6 fps, and the buffer now clears much more quickly than the D7100. The camera keeps the same focus points, but they can all focus down to -3 EV now—that's quite low light. By eliminating the anti-alias filter, Nikon has created the D7200 to produce sharper images than other APS-C cameras. Price: \$1,100. Contact: Nikon, nikonusa.com.



LEICA SL

When Leica announced their full-frame mirrorless Leica SL, no one had seen it coming. Sure, the mirrorless market has been heating up, but Leica already produces the M-series rangefinder digital cameras and S-Series medium-format system. The SL is a beast, with a body carved out of a single block of metal, a 24-megapixel sensor and the ability to capture up to 11 frames per second, making it not only the fastest full-frame mirrorless, but one of the fastest full-frame cameras, period. Price: \$7,000. Contact: Leica, us.leica-camera.com.





SONY CYBER-SHOT RX1R II

The Cyber-shot RX1R II has the same high-sensitivity, 42.4-megapixel, backside-illuminated (BSI) sensor found in the a7R II, as well as the 399-point phase-detect autofocus system, which Sony says provides a 30% improvement in focus performance. The camera also offers 5 fps shooting, though no word on how many shots until the buffer fills at that rate. It's also capable of shooting 14-bit uncompressed RAW. The camera has a fixed 35mm f/2 Zeiss Sonnar T* lens, which should provide incredible image quality. Macro shooters will rejoice over a close-focus mode, which focuses the lens down to 14cm. The built-in, 2.4M-dot OLED viewfinder pops up from the body when it's needed, and a tilting 3-inch display can be adjusted to face upward or downward. Also like the a7R II, there are WiFi and NFC connections built in. Price: \$3,299. Contact: Sony, store.sony.com.



FUJIFILM X-T10

You wouldn't think that a palm-sized camera could take billboard-sized images, but the X-T10 is one of those rare cameras that manages to combine image quality and performance while squeezing it down into a small package. Even shooters of other platforms should consider the X-T10 as a choice for a go-anywhere camera. Images are sharp and vibrant, and Fujifilm's excellent Fujinon lenses really round out this package. Price: \$700. Contact: Fujifilm, fujifilmusa.com.

CANON POWERSHOT G3X

This unassuming integrated-lens compact digital camera doesn't seem like a lot, but it had us smitten after just a few moments playing with it. The 24-600mm equivalent zoom lens looks like overkill, and it doesn't seem like image quality can stay high enough quality across the range. But it can, and it does, and the result is a travel camera that's hard to beat. Canon's legendary focus speed and image quality make this camera an excellent choice for a photographer looking for a backup camera or a system that can handle anything you throw at it. Low-light performance is especially good, and image stabilization helps keep images sharp even at the long end. Price: \$1,000. Contact: Canon, usa.canon.com.



OLYMPUS OM-D E-M5 MARK II

The Olympus OM-D E-M5 Mark II took the excellent Micro Four Thirds OM-D E-M5 and cranked it up to eleven. This "dust-proof and splashproof" sealed body can tackle the elements, and the design can appease even the most retro photographer among us. The excellent touch-screen makes focusing and choosing settings easier, and the five-axis stabilization, built-in WiFi and excellent EVF make the camera a joy to use, setting a very high bar for other MFT cameras. Price: \$1,000. Contact: Olympus, getolympus.com.



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CARL ZEISS LENSES

It's hard to pick a specific Carl Zeiss lens to highlight this year, because the company released so many. Two Batis lenses for the Sony platform, six manual-focus Milvus lenses for Nikon and Canon, and full-scale shipping of late 2014's Otus lenses make for an incredible year. The lenses all

feature the company's legendary image quality, making them some of the best in the class.

Contact: Zeiss, zeiss.com/camera-lenses.



SIGMA 24mm F1.4 DG HSM | ART

Sigma's newest 24mm is a great addition to the company's Art series of high-end lenses. The 24mm has 15 elements in 11 groups to reduce chromatic aberration and improve edge-to-edge image quality. The design of the aperture blades creates beautiful soft "bokeh" focus. Price: \$850. Contact: Sigma, sigmaphoto.com.

TAMRON SP 35mm AND SP 45mm F/1.8 Di VC USD

Tamron's new high-quality lenses—the SP 35mm F/1.8 Di VC USD and SP 45mm F/1.8 Di VC USD—came out of left field. The new SP lenses feature the best image quality in the Tamron range and provide Nikon, Canon, MFT and Sony A-mount cameras with incredible quality and versatility at a budget price. The lenses go from macro focus to distance quickly and create beautiful and accurate images, especially for the price. Price: \$600 (each). Contact: Tamron, tamron-usa.com.



LENSBABY VELVET 56

When you think of desirable traits for a lens, you don't always think "out of focus," but the Lensbaby Velvet 56 provides the company's legendary soft-focus look in a lens that's built around high-end optical characteristics. You can go from tack-sharp to completely soft with the adjustment of the aperture dial. Price: \$500. Contact: Lensbaby, lensbaby.com.

PIXELMATOR FOR MAC, iPhone AND iPad PRO

The latest update to the excellent Mac photo-editing tool Pixelmator came out in 2014, but the company's stream of updates and new apps for iPad and iPhone pull the tools together. We've often joked that Pixelmator is 80% of what you need from Photoshop at 10% of the price. The iPad version combined with the iPad Pro and the new Apple Pencil make for an incredibly precise editing tool. Price: \$30 (for Mac); \$10 (for iPad). Contact: Pixelmator, pixelmator.com.



ADOBE LIGHTROOM 6/ CREATIVE CLOUD 2015

We're partial to Adobe's subscription service for its creative apps because it reduces the sticker shock of new versions and allows photographers to get updates when the company comes up with them, not on a calendar cycle. For example, a June update to Lightroom added haze reduction tools on the fly to Lightroom 6, the most recent version of Adobe's photo management software. Subscription price varies depending on apps. Contact: Adobe, adobe.com.





DxO ONE

Olympus AIR

Sony QX

CONNECTED CAMERAS

The connected camera market came out of nowhere this year. You can read all about them in our comparison article on page 59, but we'd be remiss to include a "best of" without mentioning this burgeoning field that includes the DxO ONE, the Olympus AIR and several Sony QX models.

APPLE MACBOOK PRO

Apple's 2015 Retina MacBook Pro is a performance powerhouse, featuring a range of processors, from a 2.2 GHz quad-core Intel Core i7 up to a 2.8 GHz quad-core Intel Core i7. The Retina display provides 2880x1800 ppi resolution. With USB 3.0, Thunderbolt and an SD card reader, this is a very connected computer and can store images and documents on hard drives up to 2 TB. This laptop is fast enough to be your desktop. Price: \$1,999 (base model). Contact: Apple, apple.com.



APPLE iPad PRO

Apple's new iPad Pro represents a new era in mobile computing. The 12.9-inch screen of the iPad Pro has a resolution of 2732x2048, and the Apple-designed A9X processor gives this tablet the speed of most laptops. Price: Starting at \$799. Contact: Apple, apple.com.



SONY XPERIA Z5

The top-end Sony smartphone features a 23-megapixel still camera that captures images up to 5520x4120 pixels and is aimed at photo enthusiasts. The device has 32 GB of memory built in and a microSD slot. On-chip phase detection provides reliable autofocus, and the Snapdragon 810 processor has enough oomph for high-end editing. Price: Varies by carrier. Contact: Sony, store.sony.com.



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Whether used for routine backups, transferring images from home to studio or as expanded primary storage, the Thunderbolt version of LaCie's external hard drive is a must-have for image makers. Offering universal connectivity via Mac-friendly Thunderbolt or USB 3.0, this tough little hard drive is MIL-compliant (data is protected even during accidental drops of up to two meters). Its removable orange cover makes it easier to locate in the event of an emergency grab-and-go situation, too. It comes with LaCie Backup Assistant software, which is easy to set up and provides automatic backup of data for Mac and PC. If you don't have a backup solution, stop pressing your luck before it's too late. Price: \$269. Contact: LaCie, lacie.com.



MANFROTTO COMPACT XTREME BLACK 2-IN-1

This clever support is both a monopod for cameras and a pole for action cameras. The design allows photographers to capture a sport from the sidelines and then reach out for a unique perspective without getting in the way by simply flipping the parts around. Price: \$45. Contact: Manfrotto, manfrotto.us.



THINK TANK PHOTO FLAIR KIT

If you have a Think Tank Photo roller bag, you're not alone. In fact, if you're in a press room, it's often hard to identify which one is yours, thanks to all the similar black bags. Think Tank Photo's Flair kit makes your bag stand out from the crowd. Price: \$35. Contact: Think Tank Photo, thinktankphoto.com.



SANDISK 128 GB ULTRA FIT™ USB 3.0 FLASH DRIVE

This teeny storage drive (its length is shorter than a quarter) fits in a USB 3.0 slot and provides 128 GB of storage, at a size that's the smallest in the class. These little "pinkie drives" (our term for a drive that's smaller than a thumb drive) is big enough to give a client the entire results of a full-day shoot. Price: \$120. Contact: SanDisk, sandisk.com.



FLASHPOINT RING Li-ON 400WS RINGFLASH

This diminutive ringlight is powered by a battery pack, instead of a cable, which gives it enormous flexibility. The 400ws flash system provides more than enough power for beautiful portraits with a ringlight's trademark catchlight. The price is low enough to make it affordable for even the beginner beauty or wedding photographer. Price: \$500. Contact: Flashpoint (Adorama), adorama.com.



PALETTE TACTILE PHOTO-EDITING TOOLS

These dials and sliders are designed to simplify photographic editing, and each unit can be set to control anything from exposure to highlights to levels. Set each control to modify a setting, and extended photo-editing sessions get shorter and easier. The tools work with Photoshop, Lightroom, Illustrator and a number of video-editing programs. Price: \$199 to \$899 (depending on configuration). Contact: Palette Gear, palettegear.com.

B-GRIP UNO

We've tried a lot of systems that mount a camera to your belt or pack, but most of them have the drawback that they let the camera swing around and bump into your body. The B-Grip UNO is the first one we've tried that keeps a camera fully in place, yet fully accessible. Price: \$55. Contact: B-Grip, bgrip.com.



PEAK DESIGN EVERYDAY MESSENGER BAGS

The most successful Kickstarter campaign for a bag is now a reality, with the Everyday Messenger Bags. The bags feature magnetic closures, flexible internal separators, adjustable straps, camera clips and a design that expands or compresses, depending on what's inside. Price: \$249. Contact: Peak Design, peakdesign.com.

CANON imagePROGRAF PRO-1000 PROFESSIONAL

Canon's new imagePROGRAF PRO-1000 printer is not only the newest member of Canon's Professional printer line, it's the most advanced. Bearing the distinctive Canon red stripe to mark it as a pro device, the 17-inch-wide printer uses the company's newest print head, newest ink technology and newest paper management technology. The PRO-1000 employs suction to hold paper in place and can eject two million more dots of ink per second than their existing printer heads from the II 80ML ink cartridges. The printer also has one of the best black densities and color gamuts in its class. Price \$1,300. Contact: Canon, usa.canon.com.



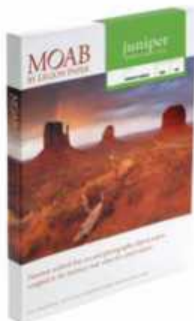
EPSON SURECOLOR P800

Epson's SureColor line offers performance and output that are better than their renowned Stylus line, in more streamlined packages. The P800 is a 17-inch-wide printer that can fit on a desktop (albeit, a very wide desk) and uses the company's UltraChrome HD inkset and high-capacity ink cartridges. It also features built-in WiFi Direct and Apple AirPrint support, which means that pros can finally output to a high-end printer without stringing Ethernet or USB cables all over the office. Price: \$1,200. Contact: Epson, epson.com.



MOAB JUNIPER BARYTA RAG 305

Moab's excellent Juniper Baryta Rag 305 uses barium sulfate in the creation of this great 100% cotton double-weight paper for brightness without having to use optical brightening agents—chemicals thought to make images fade over time. This paper is particularly well suited to printing monochrome images, though it's excellent at colors and especially delicate tones other rag papers can't reproduce. Price varies depending on paper size. Contact: Moab by Legion Paper, moabpaper.com.



HAHNEMÜHLE FINEART BARYTA SATIN

In addition to using barium sulfate for improved brightness, this Hahnemühle FineArt Baryta Satin includes a "microporous ink-receiving layer"—small pits in the paper that absorb the right amount of ink with reduced bleeding. This 100% cellulose paper is nicely warm without adding a color cast. Price varies depending on paper size. Contact: Hahnemühle, hahnemuehle.com.



RED RIVER ULTRAPRO SATIN 4.0

Another of our go-to papers, the Red River UltraPro Satin 4.0 was designed to look like a photo lab print. The pitted surface provides enough light reflection to make photos look great. This latest (4.0) revision of the paper's composition and coating results in more saturated colors and neutral monochrome prints. Price varies depending on paper size. Contact: Red River Paper, redriverpaper.com.



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The Deliberate Divide

THE RULES OF COMPOSITION ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO CREATING GREAT PHOTOS—AND ANY GREAT ART

BY TRACEY CLARK OF SHUTTER SISTERS

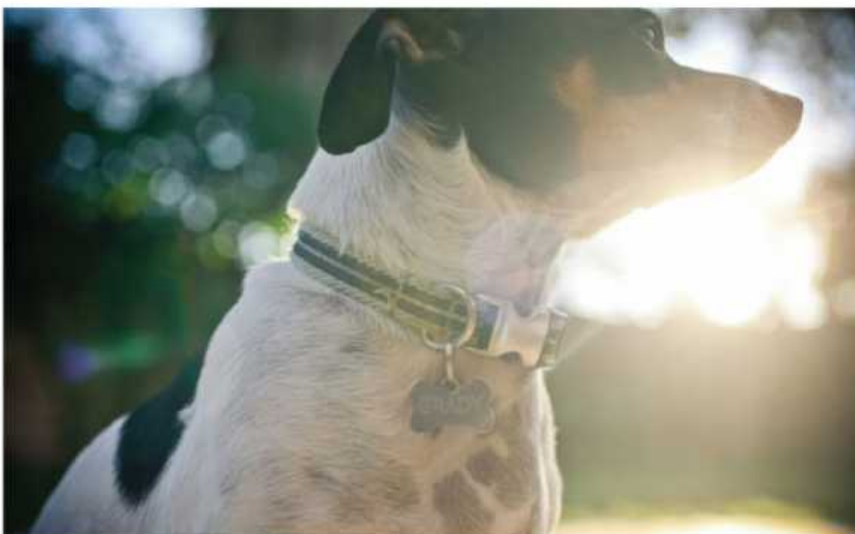


When it comes to photography, I'm big on storytelling. I know that part of why I'm drawn to capturing photographs is because of the stories that can be told through the beauty and wonder of the ordinary. Ironically, of all the photography classes and lessons I've taught (both online and off), some of the most satisfying were the ones that didn't relate to storytelling, but rather my favorites were those that tackled composition.

Storytelling is subjective; everyone has a unique story to tell and a different way of expressing it through their lens. There's internal work that happens within storytelling, and there aren't a lot of right and wrong ways to do it. It's a matter of artfully capturing something that evokes emotion in a visual narrative. Composition isn't about any of that, really. In fact, all of the storytelling is, in essence, off the table. What's more, when teaching photography, there are tried-and-true rules that can be taught and followed, and these rules are pretty much universal among all kinds of other creative outlets. Whether you're painting on a canvas, designing a website or decorating a living room, the art of creating compelling composition is very much the same.

I think what I enjoy most about teaching composition is how quickly things can click—pun intended—and how much photographic improvement can be made with just small shifts in compositional coaching.

I often refer to the camera's viewfinder as a blank canvas. It may seem tiny, but everything you include on—or, better said, *in*—your canvas matters. Every single thing either adds to or takes away from the end result. By definition,



composition means the arrangement of elements. It's not just what you include in your image, it's how you include it and where you place it in context to the other elements. It's how all of the elements are arranged and work together that's essential in using effective composition for the greater good of the end result.

There are a number of topics within teaching composition to explore: line, shape, color, light, shadow, texture and

space. My favorite way to start is, simply, with space. I have a creative composition exercise I call "Dividing up the Frame" and it's merely a matter of experimenting with different ways of using the subject you're working with to compartmentalize your photo frame.

An easy subject to start with is nearly no subject at all: barren landscapes. Living and vacationing near the beach means lots and lots of pictures taken

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from the shore toward the horizon. But dividing up the frame in different ways with each shot means that each image has a different look and feel. The Rule of Thirds always comes to mind, and although it has its merits, there are plenty of other places to put the horizon line to create the balance of a great shot! Be mindful and deliberate with how and where you're splitting up your frame. Don't let it be happenstance. Keep the lines straight, unless, of course, you purposefully want the artful surprise of a tilted horizon line. Utilize other natural elements that might come into play and work them into the composition. If the sky is of special interest, leave a lot of it. The use of space (like the sky) in a frame is considered negative space, and it's equally as important as the positive space (which is usually the term for your subject, like a silhouette of a tree in the sky, for instance). The more you experiment with something as simple as a landscape, you'll start to get a feel for the different ways to divide your frame with the elements you're including in your image and you'll start getting a feel for what feels good to your photographer's eye. The funny thing about good composition, you know it when you see it by how the image makes you feel—balanced and visually pleasing.

Try finding other things with lines to shoot and study. Beyond horizons, lines are everywhere and in everything, and can be used as a valuable tool when you're practicing dividing up your frame to better your composition. Keep in mind that lines will lead your eye in, out or around your photo frame, so be mindful that where you put them and how you use them can drastically impact your images. Sometimes lines can work effectively when you create symmetry in your image, but other times, it's the asymmetrical approach that works best. Testing and trying approaches is a great way to find the best solution for what look and feel you're trying to create. When working with diagonals, try guiding lines through the corner of your frame. Just try to be deliberate.

In working with other subject matter to divide up your frame, I recommend not limiting yourself to keeping your main subject centered in the middle of the frame. Like with the exercises above, try shooting the same subject a number of times, framing it in as many different ways as you can in order to compare the outcomes. Again, it comes down to more than just the "where" your subject is in the frame, it's also the "how" that matters.

Try cropping the subject in unique ways. This works well for still-life shots, as well as portraits. When you fill your frame and crop off part of your subject, you're using that subject to divide the frame. Cropping off the top of your subject's head, for example (one of my signature portrait techniques), can improve the portrait compositionally. Try the technique and then study the whole frame. Notice the interesting shapes that your division has created within the frame.

If you're struggling to really notice composition (and you're distracted by your subject), it can be quite helpful to squint your eyes when you look at your image. Once you squint and lose sharp focus, you can better pay attention to how balanced your frame looks. Notice the shapes, lights, darks, and balance and adjust your next shot accordingly. Sometimes it's only a matter of adjusting a little bit—a simple shift, a little tilt—that makes all the difference. Once you start to take notice of how dividing up your frame works to your greatest compositional advantage, you'll become more and more mindful and deliberate in your photographic process, which can only mean better results.

DP



TRACEY CLARK is the founder of *Shutter Sisters*, a collaborative photo blog and thriving community of female photo enthusiasts, shuttersisters.com. Learn more about Tracey and her work at traceyclark.com.



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"THE MOST rewarding aspect of the project for me has been the response from the parents," remarks photographer Jason Watts. "It comes through in what they express in the letters they submit. It's a beautiful marriage of art and human experience."



BEARING WITNESS

SOMETIMES PHOTOS AREN'T ENOUGH TO CAPTURE A MOMENT. PHOTOGRAPHER JASON WATTS HELPS FAMILIES DOCUMENT UNIQUE PERIODS IN THEIR LIVES.

BY TRACEY CLARK, WITH JASON WATTS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON WATTS

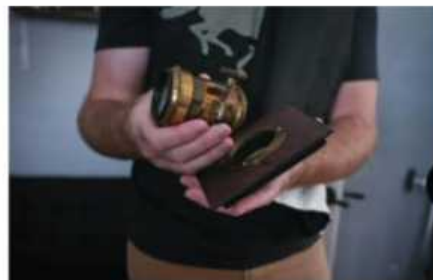


One morning in mid-August, as I was scrolling through my Instagram feed, a stunningly simple vintage-style portrait of a young boy caught my attention. The words written across the image, posted by photographer Jason Watts, read, "Bearing Witness." That image and those words stirred my very soul. I was only two weeks away from traveling across the country to drop my firstborn off at college, and as I read Jason's caption, the tears welled up:

In an age where we snap thousands of images of our kids to capture those moments we want to cherish later on, we seldom sit down and put our thoughts to paper on what it all means; what it feels like to watch your most precious creation grow up, experience the world and the deep love we have for them. So I thought to myself, that would be a good price for a portrait session, a simple letter from parent to child.

I knew immediately that this was exactly what I needed to document and honor this time: This bittersweet and strangely surreal transition in the life of my family. Fast-forward to the portrait session Jason did of each of my two girls. I watched as his heartfelt and mindful creative vision and my most precious creations worked together in this unassuming, poetic process of true and authentic portraiture. I couldn't help but think that it was in this kind of photographic ritual that the term "making a portrait" rather than "taking" one was derived. The window of time we spend together was an important piece to Bearing Witness. Being a part of the portrait process from beginning to end only endeared me more to Jason, his vision and the project, not to mention my daughters. They reveled in their roles, not being able to help but feel special, each having their turn being the sole subject of focus.

I recall my conversation with Jason when he first shared his intentions. Using parenting itself as a metaphor for the



BEHIND-THE-SCENES PHOTOS BY TRACEY CLARK



WITNESSING THE PROCESS: Signing on as a participant of Jason's project, I didn't know what to expect. It was a refreshing change to walk into a photographic process I knew nothing about. Witnessing Jason in his element as he interacted with each of my girls and openly shared his creative process felt sacred. Right before my eyes I watched my daughters captured forever in a way I had never seen them before. It was one of the biggest gifts of being a part of the project. Having the opportunity to document the magic of the process itself, through my own lens, was a way I could share with Jason the experience from a parent's perspective, while honoring the project in my own way.



JASON WATTS – SIX STRATEGIES FOR CREATING MORE MEANINGFUL PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECTS WITH YOUR CHILDREN


- Incorporate their likes and interests in the portraits or project. It's important to make your kids feel involved, considered and valued.
- Allow them to have creative freedom in the process of creating and editing the images. They will take pride in having a hand in creating the end result.
- Create a photo book or an album of the final project to display and share. This allows kids to feel proud of their work and can be great conversation starters.
- Use words and pictures together in your project. The stories behind the images will only bring a deeper meaning to the photographs.
- Set goals as a family and follow through. It helps kids to see the purpose of setting a vision and the importance of proper planning in order to achieve the final product.
- Set up a time after the project is complete to talk about what they/you learned through the process and what they/you might do differently. This could lead into the next project you'll do together.

photographic approach he was taking, he remarked that he didn't want to make the project easy on himself (because, well, parenting isn't easy!), which is why he opted not to shoot with his DSLR for fear of falling into autopilot mode. Instead, he chose to shoot everything with a 4x5 camera and a 150-year-old Petzval brass lens (which has no shutter or aperture control) using one single light source to "make things interesting." He knew that having to be creatively mindful and skillfully heightened as he worked would be his own way to honor the process we all go through as parents raising our children. What's more, Jason would use photographic paper as his film. Each frame of the project requires him to take a sheet of photographic paper, cut it down to size in order to fit into a holder, make the exposure, develop each sheet by hand, dry the prints, scan them into Lightroom and clean them up there. The whole process from start to finish takes about 40 minutes per image. It was clear to me that Bearing Witness was more than a conceptual photography project, it was a personal project that came from need, passion and pure heart.

It wasn't until later that I discovered that the journey that brought him to Bearing Witness came through loss and questioning. When writing about the project, Jason reveals the backstory:

From battling depression, to losing my Grandmother, life was demanding I pay attention and refocus my perspective, both personally and creatively. In all of this, my artistic side took a backseat and waited patiently for me to regain control. Once I had time to clear my thoughts and catch my breath, that deeply spiritual desire to create and transform my experience into something positive started to rumble in my soul.

When my Grandmother passed away, I was in charge of getting a slide show put together. This involved scanning hundreds of old pictures, some of which I had never seen before. It was extremely moving to walk through the images and "watch" my



"UNLIKE THE modern-day photography that the children are used to, a large-format camera such as the one used for this project elicits a certain response and attention," Jason reflects.

Grandmother's life unfold. The images involved stories and wonderful conversations. The photographs were like anchor points to buried treasure and that's when it hit me. I knew the project would include some concept of childhood, but now I knew the extra component to make it something special and unique. A letter. A simple handwritten letter from parent to child, which would be married to the image. The portrait would be a photographic representation of the child and the letter would be a metaphorical portrait of the parent. I wanted to set up a project that helped facilitate meaningful and encouraging conversations. Something that both parent and child alike could revisit and reflect. That reminded children that they are worthy of love and belonging and reminded parents of the journey past.

It's really no wonder I was drawn to participate in this project. I was at the

moment in a parent's life when everything comes to an end of sorts, and there's nothing to do but look back at your child's life and hope that you've provided anything and everything they will ever need as they fly out on their own.

As for my daughters' breathtaking portraits? What Jason captured is iconic. And the letters I wrote to accompany those frozen moments in time are my contribution, my way of Bearing Witness. Jason is providing invaluable portraits to his clients at no monetary cost to them, as he's only asking for a letter in return. And, I can say for certain, after writing two tear-stained letters to my precious girls—words I have offered from my heart that they will have forever—it's the best investment any parent could ever possibly make. DP

Visit Tracey Clark's website at traceyclark.com, and visit Jason Watts' website at jasonwattsphotography.com and follow him on Instagram @jasonwattsphotography.



"THOUGH THE parameters for each portrait are exactly the same—camera, lighting, location, etc.—each child brings a new set of ideas to the table, which helps to shape the final image. This kind of unique relationship between photographer and subject has been a pure joy," says Jason.



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GO WITH THE FLOW

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICK SAMMON

Capture the silky water effect with these tips and tools

John Lennon said, “Reality leaves a lot to the imagination.” When it comes to your photography, it’s your imagination—your creativity—that makes you who you are. That’s very cool.

One of the controls we can use to create our own photographic reality is the shutter speed setting on our cameras. With that simple control, we can alter time—by “freezing” it (with fast shutter speeds) and by blurring it (with slow shutter speeds). Other elements we can use

to create our own photographic reality include Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom and plug-ins.

When it comes to photographing moving water, most photographers like the effect produced by using a slow shutter speed, which creates the silky effect. “Frozen-in-time” water, on the other hand, isn’t as pleasing to look at, in most cases.

In this article, I’ll share with you my top techniques and accessories for creating the silky water effect. Let’s go!

SET THE SHUTTER SPEED

In my photo workshops, I’m often asked, “What’s the best shutter speed to use to create the silky water effect?” My answer always is, “It depends.” It depends on how fast the water is moving, how close you are to the water, what lens you’re using and the desired effect. I took this photograph in Iceland using a shutter speed of 1/4 of a second. I experimented with slightly faster and slower shutter speeds, but 1/4 seemed to work best for me.

My advice is to experiment with different slow shutter speeds, say, from 1/15 of a second to several seconds. When you get home, choose the image you like best.

WATCH THE DIRECTION

The direction in which the water is moving can affect the mood and feeling of a photograph—and it’s the mood and feeling that are the most important elements in the making of a photograph. After taking several photographs of the Coquille River Light on the Oregon coast, I realized the most dramatic image was created when the water was flowing around the rocks in the foreground and out toward the sea. To make the photograph even more dramatic, I converted the image to black-and-white in Lightroom.

The direction of moving water can change fast. To capture subtle differences in the movement of the water, set your camera on high frame rate. You’ll be surprised at how a fraction of a second affects the impact and drama of an image.



COMPARE RESULTS

Here’s an example of how different shutter speeds change how the movement of the water is captured in a photograph. While photographing Thor’s Well on the Oregon coast, I used a shutter speed of 1/4 of a second for the photograph on the right, and I used a shutter speed of 1/50 of a second for the photograph at far right. I converted my color files to black-and-white using Nik Silver Efex Pro.





ND FILTERS ARE A MUST

To achieve a long exposure, set your ISO to 100 (or 200, if that's the lowest ISO setting on your camera) and your aperture to $f/22$ (or smaller, if available). In bright daylight, those settings may not be sufficient to let you shoot at a slow shutter speed to create the silky water effect. ND filters to the rescue!

ND filters reduce the amount of light entering the lens, letting you use long shutter speeds even on sunny days. You have two choices: a variable ND filter (usually 2 to 8 stops) or a fixed ND filter. Serious photographers have a set of three ND filters (0.9, 1.2 and 3.0) that reduces the amount of light entering the lens in various degrees, offering total control over shutter speeds and apertures. Fixed ND filters also can be stacked for extremely long exposures.

A polarizing filter, which is often used to reduce glare on water, also can act as an ND filter. And, speaking of polarizers, a variable ND filter is basically a double polarizing filter. With a polarizing filter, you can over-polarize an image, which can cause a dark band, or a dark center spot, in a photograph. That can happen when using a

variable ND filter, too—to a much greater (worse) degree. Be very careful not to “dial in” too much of the effect when using a variable ND filter. Check your image carefully on your camera's LCD monitor.

Several apps, including NDTimer, can help you get a good exposure when using an ND filter. These apps take the guesswork out of getting the correct camera settings. If you don't have an ND filter, use Mother Nature's free ND filter: low light. Shoot before sunrise or after sunset, or on a very overcast day.

Other Accessories: Your camera must be rock-steady during long exposures. Don't cheap out on a flimsy tripod. Use a cable release, an app or your camera's self-timer to trip the shutter.

Always carry a lens cleaning cloth to wipe water spray off the front element of your lens—and never change lenses around waterfalls or a pounding surf! Keeping my lens spotless helped me get a clean shot of this small waterfall in Iceland.

Camera covers, such as OP/TECH Rain Sleeves, keep cameras dry in misty situations. NEOS overshoes, which fit over hiking boots and sneakers, keep feet dry when shooting in water. Rubber boots work, too.

SHOOT WIDE

When photographing waterfalls (or rivers or streams), take close-ups and wide-angle shots. Close-up shots are cool, but wide-angle shots, like this image I took in Iceland, add a sense of place to the main subject. I took this photograph with my Canon EOS 5D Mark III and Canon EF 17-40mm lens set at 17mm.



TRY BLACK-AND-WHITE

Sometimes, close-up waterfall images, like this one that I took at the New Croton Dam in Croton-on-Hudson, New York, don't have a lot of color or contrast. If that's the case, try converting your image to black-and-white and then boosting the contrast. When boosting contrast, be careful, very careful, not to blow out the highlights, which is easy to do in whitewater images.



TRY HDR

Usually, the enemy of HDR is movement—moving people and moving leaves. Not so with moving water. When you shoot HDR of moving water, the water is in a slightly different place for each image, so the blurred/silky effect is enhanced. This is a Canon EOS 5D Mark III in-camera HDR image that I took in Iceland. My exposures were 0 EV, +2 EV and -2 EV. The HDR mode was set to Art Vivid.



EXPOSE FOR THE HIGHLIGHTS

When photographing bright subjects like water against dark subjects like rocks, it's easy to overexpose the water. To ensure a correct exposure of the water, make sure your highlight alert is activated. If you get "blinkies" (an overexposure warning), reduce the exposure to the point where you have no "blinkies."

Also shoot with your histogram (your in-camera light meter) activated. Make sure you don't have a spike on the right. If your image is overexposed more than a stop or so, it may be impossible to rescue those highlights, even if you're shooting RAW. I took this photograph in Iceland with my highlight alert activated and histogram displayed.



I hope these tips help you capture some of nature's natural wonders. As always, don't get so involved in the technical aspects of photography that you miss out on experiencing the moment. Stop and smell the roses. DP



RICK SAMMON is a longtime friend of this magazine. Learn more from Rick on his website: ricksammon.com.





TRAVEL LIGHTER TO SHOOT SMARTER

Fully mobile photography has changed the game for travel photographers—find out how it can make your shoots better, too

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY DL BYRON

For the entire history

of photography, photographers have strived to make the process of capturing an image more portable and more instantaneous. The camera obscura (literally, “dark room”), the precursor to what we know as a camera, was actually a room with a pinhole in it. That’s as immobile as you can possibly get.

It was also the starting point for the effort to make the camera smaller and lighter, and make it easier to share photographs with clients, friends or family. First came a portable camera obscura in the form of a tent in the 1600s. Next, Thomas Wedgwood used a newly developed technique to make glass-plate images. Those were more portable, but faded quickly.

When Joseph Niépce took the first “permanent” photo, the equipment had shrunk to the size of a box. Large-format cameras gave way to medium format, to 35mm and to digital. Meanwhile, the method of giving people images changed, too. Glass plates were replaced with paper, and that was replaced with zeros and ones.

THE BENEFITS OF SMALLER

For years, I’ve tried to refine the digital workflow even further, to try to get the most power out of the least gear possible. Years ago, when I started being an adventure sports and lifestyle blogger, a normal rig would have included 10 pounds or more of pro bodies and lenses; now it’s teeny mirrorless cameras capturing photos of better quality than those early DSLRs.

When the original Sony Alpha series of full-frame cameras was released, I picked them up, and I’ve been amazed by their capabilities, and they have changed how I shoot when traveling, as well as how I’m treated by other photographers and by subjects.

In the press pits at races, I’m often looked down upon with the “my lens is bigger than your lens” attitude so prevalent in the press corp. Having a mirrorless camera makes you look like

a “newb,” for sure, even when you’re media-badged and it’s a camera with a 36-megapixel sensor and an expensive, excellent Zeiss lens on the front.

I found, though, that the small size of the cameras helps more than it hurts. On a recent assignment to cover mountain biking in Colorado at the Trestle Bike Park, I took shot after shot with my diminutive camera—the mountain bikers riding through a rock garden barely noticed me. Maybe they guessed I was a tourist? The result was that I was able to get intimate, in-the-moment shots without sticking a long camera lens in their faces and making them self-conscious.

Another professional photographer friend taught me early on to look for where all the photographers are and then go somewhere else. I can’t tell you how many shots I’ve seen from bike races that look the same because the pros are huddled together at the end of the course, waiting to get the *de rigueur* hands-raised, winning shot.

Meanwhile, there’s a great angle farther down the course or nestled in the crook of a tree, while mountain bikers fly past. When I would take up a spot from a good vantage on the trail, they would often tense up when they saw me with a long lens, putting on fake smiles across their grimacing faces. They don’t do that with more compact gear.

While adopting a mirrorless workflow has changed how I shoot images, it has helped my travel even more. I can ride with a small camera in my pack without breaking my back on a climb, and I can stuff all of my camera gear under the seat ahead of me on a plane.

BEING MORE EFFICIENT

The game changer, reducing my gear needs even more, has been the iPad Air 2, which, combined with Sony’s PlayMemories app to transfer files over a WiFi hotspot, has revolutionized my image-sharing workflow.

For on-location work, I used to travel with a laptop, but now I’m using the iPad for on-location edits. My editing app of choice is Google’s Snapseed, which features selective healing tools.

I’m no longer traveling with a laptop and all the accessories, just the

camera, SD cards, iPad, cords and charger. At the shoot, on a plane or back at the hotel, I’ll pick a few shots, do some simple edits, “heal” away a branch or whatever flaw I see, and upload.

Back in the studio, of course, I’ll edit with desktop tools, but I’m now able to keep a steady stream of photos going on various social networks in high-res from a full-frame camera during a shoot.

Once the files are on my iPad, I’ve set up Google to automatically upload them to the cloud, and the magic continues with GIFs being created from a series of shots automatically by Google. Often, my workflow consists of shooting a series of stills, transferring them to the iPad and then launching the Google app to find a suitable animated GIF waiting for me. I really like it when technology automatically helps me get the job done and I can share files to Instagram or Vine with ease, where short animated clips are popular.

MORE POWER TO YOU

With iOS, one can import RAW from a camera and use the embedded JPEG files for social media. Previous iterations of the iPad would choke on the large files from the Sony, but the A8X chip with a 64-bit architecture handles them with ease.

I expect the just announced iPad Pro to convince even more photographers to leave their laptops in the studio thanks to an even faster A9X. This is Apple’s third-generation chip with 64-bit desktop-class architecture, promising to deliver 1.8 times the CPU performance and double the graphics performance of the iPad Air 2. Add the precision of a stylus that touches a single pixel, and suddenly the drawing tablet disappears from my workflow.

What I’ve learned in my travels to media events is that the amount of fun had on a shoot is inversely proportional to the weight of camera gear transported by the photographer.

After spending a few hours shooting that Colorado rock garden, I decided to ride it myself before descending back down to the lodge. I wouldn’t have felt confident to clear the transition between boulders with a bigger camera



and lens bouncing around on my back, and I wouldn't have tried it at all if I had had a laptop with me.

TO GET LIGHTER

Photographers looking to improve their workflow by ditching the gear should evaluate all the aspects of their workflow. Mirrorless bodies can replace heavier DSLR bodies (and compacts can sometimes replace mirrorless, as we cover in "Shooting Campaigns From The Saddle Of A Bike" by colleague Jeremy Dunn). Tablets replace laptops. Wireless replaces cables.

Today's mobile photographers need to evaluate their tools and decide if they really need what they think they need. Do you really need to pack a zoom lens when a small prime will do? Do you need to bring a card reader when all you need on the road is WiFi transfer? Do you need a bulky camera bag when a svelte backpack might do the trick?

One trick I do comes from the Steve Martin movie *L.A. Story*. The main character's girlfriend is a stylist who advises, "One of the first things I always teach my clients is about the point system. You should never have more than seven things on. You know, like your earrings count for two points, those daisies count for three points. But the best thing to do is, right before you go out, look in the mirror and turn around real fast, and the first thing that catches your eye, get rid of it."

To improve your workflow by lightening your load, put everything out and examine if you need it when you travel. Find the first thing that catches your eye, and see if you can get rid of it.

Photographic workflow has come a long way since the days of glass plates and big rooms with pinholes in them. A streamlined, lightweight photographic kit not only reduces your clutter, but opens up new possibilities for capturing images without the awkwardness that a massive camera kit can cause.

DP

*DL Byron is the publisher of Bike Hugger, **BikeHugger.com**. You can find him on Twitter and Instagram @bikehugger*

A high-angle, slightly blurred photograph of a cyclist riding on a paved road. The cyclist is wearing a black helmet, a blue cap, a bright pink safety vest over a dark long-sleeved shirt, black cycling pants, and yellow gloves. They are leaning forward in a racing posture. The road has double yellow lines and a white edge line. The background is slightly out of focus, showing some greenery on the left.

SHOOTING CAMPAIGNS FROM THE SADDLE OF A BIKE

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEREMY DUNN

Jeremy Dunn captures adventure-sports images, often side by side with the athletes, and has turned to film point-and-shoot cameras and compact digitals to make it possible

▲ Rapha is a high-end cycling clothing company, which also sponsors pro cycling teams and hosts rides for enthusiasts. These images are from the first Rapha Women's Ambassador trips that we did, The Calling. It was the first time that I was on assignment for Rapha, and I was riding along in a car next to the riders instead of actually being out there with them. In theory, it was easy to shoot out of a car, but in practice, it became a bit of a nightmare. Driving on Highway 1, we were trying to get ahead of the women so I could then jump out at a safe spot and get ready as they sped by. The fun thing about the point-and-shoot cameras, especially when some really fast ladies are racing by, is that you never know what you're going to get, especially when the screen is broken and you can't tell if the flash is on or not.

Photographer Jeremy Dunn has shot numerous national campaigns and magazine pieces. Because he needs to travel with the athletes he covers, he uses lightweight point-and-shoot film cameras and compact digitals. The result is a look that's grainy and reminiscent of vintage European sports magazines.



▲ Always having a camera in your jersey pocket is one of the rules I have when going out for bicycle rides. This was a chance encounter with a professional racer in the south of France, and I was happy to have the camera on me. The Yashica is a little bulkier than most when it comes to these kinds of cameras, but the “Super” aspect of it means that it’s waterproof and so impervious to a person like myself who sweats more than most. It also takes great pictures on the fly.

When this rider came whizzing past us, the trick was to do two things at once: Maintain a grueling pace on the bike with one hand and fish the camera out of your jersey pocket with the other. I shoot with my right hand, so I generally keep it in my rear right pocket. The Yashica also has an easy (and loud) mechanism for opening the lens, which is a nice check

when trying to ride 25 mph up a hill behind this guy, because you can hear it. Once the camera is open, the other downside of the Yashica is apparent—the tiny viewing window. But, once you play with it a lot, you tend to get an idea of what happens when you point it in a general direction.

Rider zooms past. Speed up with your legs while pulling out the camera, wait for approaching cars to clear the shot, hold on until we round this bend with the nice caramel-colored rocks, see him stand up to pull away from the annoying tourist on his rear wheel, and fire away. Easy as that.

▲ Despite the fact that the viewfinder on this little camera [Olympus MJU Panorama] tends to steam up quickly, this trip into Washington and Oregon was the one that solidified the camera as one of my favorites. Using drugstore Fuji 200 film and the abundant July light, I was able to capture some of my favorite riding photos.

There are two things that I like to do when shooting photos of the rides that I’m on, and these two photos illustrate this well. Hang back and ride ahead. I’ll drift to the center of the road if no cars are approaching and I can see something that looks like a great backdrop up ahead. The beauty of this is that the subjects, especially if they’re well into a 100-plus-mile day in the saddle, are generally unaware or care little about what you’re doing. The other technique involves a little more planning, but the Rowena Loops, just outside of Portland, are a great spot for going ahead and setting up a shot. Now, don’t get me wrong, I love my man Dan Penner (the subject of this shot) more than most, but I know on a good day that I can climb these loops quite a bit faster than him. And I also know that when you get to that last corner, you can look back on the more drastic of the loops. Then, when I beat him to the top, all I have to do is wait for him to cruise into the frame.

GEAR USED:
CANON REBEL EOS 2000
WITH PANCAKE LENS
LEICA MINILUX ZOOM
OLYMPUS MJU
PANORAMA
YASHICA T4 & T4 SUPER





◀ The beauty of cyclocross racing lies in its frenetic pacing, riders attacking one another at every single corner. And, if the course happens to be pancake-flat, like this World Cup in Rome a few years ago, there's a good chance that a large group of riders will stick together for the entire one-hour race.

This particular race would be one of the last for the second rider in the picture, Niels Albert, as he was to be diagnosed with a congenital heart defect a few months later and be forced to retire in the prime of his career. But, he should be happy because, at this point in the race, he was with five of the best riders in the world.

The beautiful Italian sunshine was fading as fast as the race, so my only hope was to crawl under the plastic signage that was blocking the horse track from view and lie in wait for these riders to come blasting by.

► Grit and grime are your friends. There's a moment at the end of a cyclocross race, it's right after riders have crossed the finish line and right before they're starting their recovery where they're very tired and very vulnerable. A kind word of praise usually does the trick, but also knowing your subjects goes a long way. If they have seen you at the start/finish lines of the last 10 or 15 races, there's a good chance they will be okay with you sticking a camera in their face.

Such is the case with this Richard Sachs Cyclocross Team rider. It was a muddy, muddy day at the Gran Prix of Gloucester in 2012. The rain was coming in fits and spurts, causing the mud to continue kicking up as the hour-long race went on. But it wasn't raining hard enough to actually wash it off the faces of the riders as they crossed the finish line.



◀ This trip will always hold a special place in my heart. I wasn't photographing it in any real shape or form. I was driving the van for the actual photographer, Ben Ingham. In between the riding and shooting, I'd pull out this new hunk of metal I was hauling around, the Leica Minilux Zoom, and attempt to emulate Ben as best I could. He was cool as a cucumber, and I'm not sure if I ever actually saw him taking a photo (he turned in some amazing photos from this shoot).

The tip here is to know your subjects. I may have been just the driver, in this case, but I've ridden hundreds and hundreds of miles with these two characters, so they have no problem with me sticking cameras in their faces while they bask in the fading Palm Desert sunshine. Then just hope that Ingham runs out of film, sees you're shooting with Portra 160 and asks to steal a roll or three.

Follow Jeremy Dunn @JeremyDDunn, and visit his website at theathleticcommunity.com.

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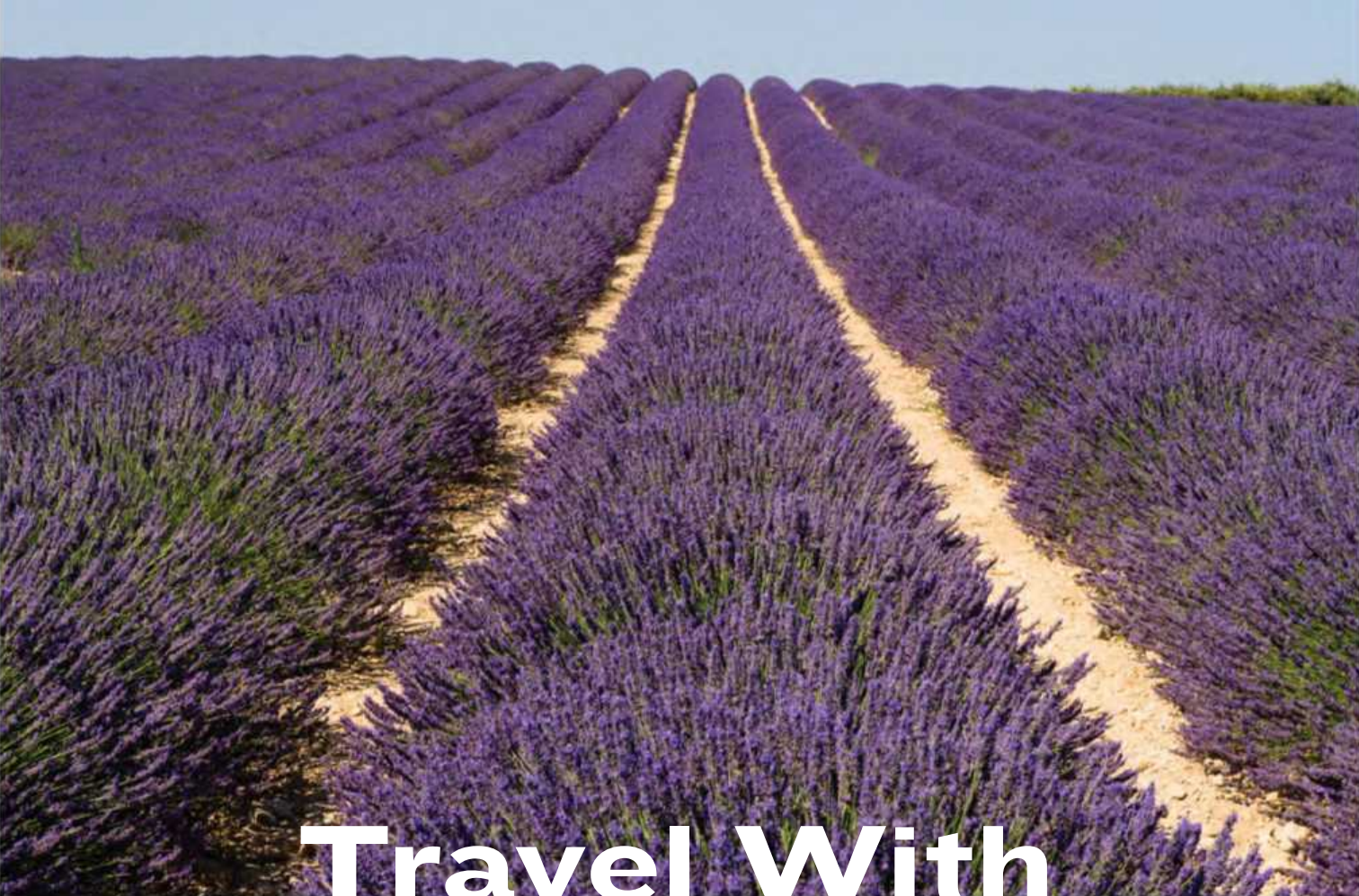
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Travel With **PURPOSE**

Planning and focus can be the difference between amazing travel photos and a collection of dull snapshots

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM BOL

Have you ever sat through a friend's vacation slideshow and dreaded every minute of it? Countless images of cluttered markets, busy landscapes and cliché snapshots blur into oblivion. You nod your head in a daze of encouragement, wanting to be polite, but after the last shot of the cute kid eating ice cream, you can't take it anymore. If only your cell phone would ring and free you from this torture!

Don't be this photographer. Instead, how about dazzling your friends, family and maybe a photo contest judge with stunning, creative travel images?

Creating a strong portfolio of travel images requires a combination of solid camera craft, creative vision and prior planning. Utilizing these traits will help you produce images with impact and create a meaningful picture story from your trip. Let's look

BEFORE



at how to be a travel photographer, not a snapshot tourist.

WHAT'S YOUR END GOAL?

I teach a lot of travel photography workshops, and students often admit that they're overwhelmed when they step off the plane. Foreign cultures and colorful landscapes assault the senses with so many new experiences, it's hard to focus. Photographers are giddy with excitement and photograph everything in sight.

This isn't a bad thing; this excitement is why I love to travel and take pictures. But if you don't focus your shooting, you may end up with some terrific individual photos, but not a meaningful set of images.

Travel photography generally takes two approaches: You either record your experiences traveling in a new location, or you photograph the area from an outsider's perspective. This way, the story isn't about you; it's about the people you meet and places you visit.

Whatever approach you take, plan out your photography goals for your trip. Focusing on what you want to achieve with your images will result in better compositions and a tighter variety of interesting subject matter.

Every time I travel to a new country, I try to record all the "senses" of that trip, not just what my eyes perceive. In other words, I want viewers to see, feel, smell, hear and taste the location through my photographs. I work on capturing images that transcend my own experiences in a location and share that with the viewer back home. To really photograph the soul of a city, you need to get out and experience it. You need to photograph people, food, iconic landmarks, daily life and the countryside.

I was in southern France last summer during the lavender harvest and Bastille Day. I laid out a framework for my photography, and created a checklist of things to experience and photograph. To create a solid travel portfolio of images, I needed to photograph the people of the area, lavender fields, Bastille Day festivities, French cuisine, iconic landmarks and the famous white stallions. I had my shooting plan in



place; now I needed to shoot creatively with solid camera craft.

HOW TO SHOOT CREATIVELY

This is the fun part. You get to photograph to your heart's content and create your picture story. Since you want to avoid the dreaded "tourist snapshot," you need to create images to catch the viewer's eye. Here are some tips for creative shooting.

1. Photograph in good light. Photographing in good light is critical to creating strong images. Photograph during the early morning and late evening for beautiful warm light. If you're shooting during the day, look for light that works for your subject. If I'm photographing a person on the street, I'll try to photograph them in open shade or with the sun at their back. If I'm stuck photographing in midday light, I may use my flash to open up shadows. Photograph skylines during the "blue hour" right after the sun has gone down for beautiful purple twilight. Be aware of light and how it affects your images; good photography hinges on beautiful light. If you're stuck shooting in harsh midday light, find ways to use that to your favor, capturing the contrast between light and shadow, or focusing on details instead of landscapes.

2. Tighten up your shots. There's a strong tendency to photograph travel scenes with too much in the frame. Ask yourself what you're really photographing, and crop down to the important subject matter. If you can't explain why objects are in your shot, chances are,

they shouldn't be in your image. You want the viewer to know exactly what your subject is without distractions. I photographed a man cutting lavender, for example. The first image had white sky at the top of the shot. The bright color distracted the viewer and added nothing to the image. By cropping out the sky, the photograph became much stronger.

3. Find a fresh perspective. This is very important in producing eye-catching travel images. If you shoot everything from eye level, you're doing the same thing most other tourists are doing. Try finding a high vantage point to photograph down on a busy market. Or how about photographing at ground level as a man walks his dog past you on a cobblestone street? I was perched on top of a truck when I photographed the white horses of the Camargue region in France. This high perspective gave more depth to the herd of horses. Instead of seeing a few horses at eye level, I could photograph the entire herd as they galloped past me.

4. Look for layers. Photographers work in a two-dimensional medium to record a three-dimensional environment. Images with more depth and dimension are more interesting. I look for elements in my scene that add dimension to the shot. Try photographing through trees, fences, gates, windows and screens. Use a shallow depth of field to blur the foreground layer, but keep your subject sharp in the background. Another trick is photographing scenes reflected in mirrors and windows. Reflected subjects

have a three-dimensional quality when you show both the reflection and the actual subject.

5. Get up early. Try going out early in the morning as the locals begin their day. Streets are less crowded, and vendors are more open to being photographed. Dramatic rays of sun will illuminate gritty alleys and backlit flowers. Sometimes I walk for hours exploring a new place seeking out images. Other times I sit on a park bench and see what unfolds before me. Both approaches work well for travel photography. Time dictates how I photograph a new area. If I only have a few hours, then I move around to capture as many interesting photos as possible.

USE SOLID CAMERA SKILLS

Photoshop and other editing software can be a valuable part of a photographer's workflow, but let's not forget that photography begins with taking the picture. I see many students who barely scratch the surface of understanding all their camera functions. Knowing how your camera works, and what it's capable of, will expand your vision of what's possible and change how you photograph a scene. Here are a few camera techniques that are helpful for creating travel images.

1. Pan and blur. Almost every culture has a speedy means of transport; cars, trains, buses, horses and rickshaws carry people through busy streets. How do you illustrate that frenetic energy of the city? Try slowing your shutter speed down to around 1/30th of a second or slower and panning with the moving vehicle as it goes past. Look for clean, dark backgrounds and subjects with bright colors. The trick is getting just a little sharpness in the subject with blurs of motion streaking behind it. In France, I found an old-fashioned carousel ride with colorful horses. Instead of shooting the carousel

from a distance (the snapshot), I walked up close and shot pan and blur images to create a much more interesting image.

2. Multiple exposures. Do you know if your camera has a multiple exposure mode? Many cameras have this function; all you have to do is set the number of exposures and the camera will blend them together seamlessly. On my recent trip to France, I photographed stained glass windows using multiple exposures. Instead of the standard stained glass shot, I produced a kaleidoscope of colors by using multiple exposure mode and rotating my camera slightly after each frame.



3. Long exposures. A travel photographer is bound to photograph in low light during a trip. Sometimes I shoot 30-second exposures or longer at twilight to record night scenes. This requires a cable release, a remote or use of the timer, and a solid tripod to get a sharp image. Recently, I've been using a 10-stop ND filter during the day. In the middle of the day, I can shoot a two-minute exposure, which renders puffy cumulus clouds silky for an ethereal look. Other times, I may photograph streets filled with people at long exposures for a blurry, abstract effect.

4. Better bokeh. Bokeh refers to the quality of the out-of-focus elements in an image. Try experimenting with wide-open apertures like $f/1.8$ or $f/2.8$ or $f/4$ on your next trip. Using a shallow depth of field creates separation of subjects from the background. Let the background go slightly out of focus. The viewer will focus on what's sharp in your image (the subject) and then explore the out-of-focus elements. I love to photograph food this way. Many markets in France have delicious pastries in glass displays along the street. I like to photograph the flaky croissants at $f/4$ to create one small point

of focus and let the rest of the image go soft. The world doesn't always have to be in focus; engage the viewer's curiosity about the blurry elements in the background.

Travel photography is very exciting and rewarding. I'm leaving for Iceland in a few hours, and I can almost smell the salty air and feel the cool spray from the Gullfoss waterfall. I'm ready to photograph all the "senses," and share the images with friends when I return. DP

To see more of Tom Bol's photography, visit his website at tombolphoto.com

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FOCUSING ON NATURE

What happens when a portrait photographer turns her eye to the discarded elements in her environment? Images of objects that feel like portraits.

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEN LEMEN

As a photographer, I've always been determined to find the kind of hope that illuminates a frame. My eye is trained to see tiny things—the impossible ray of light, the most subtle gesture, the glance that says it all. I love trying to capture the human spirit in my lens; I love even more the invitation to travel and see the world with new eyes.

In 2008, I won a contest that enabled me to take portraits around the globe. Traveling to remote places while having to transcend culture, class and language challenged me to really listen with my lens. Since my subjects often weren't used to being photographed, I had to learn how to gather a powerful image fast in available light, then quickly turn the camera around and show the subject what I was able to capture. This established rapport for longer shoots and more honest portraits. It also forced me to work quickly, without a lot of equipment, so as to connect on a more visceral level.

People were my constant focus as I traveled the globe, but over time, my eye started to wander. I could see how the landscape, the weather and the natural world shaped the people I was meeting in these remote locations. Women rose at dawn to sweep the dusty yards in careful strokes, after picking the just right twigs

to make a perfect broom. Former refugees described the perfect leaves for weaving shelter when rain arrived unexpectedly in the fields. There was an almost audible conversation between the natural world and the “real” one, and I started to see natural elements differently.

Returning home, my focus shifted. I had left home for that international assignment determined to find the elements of human nature that made an image light up. Now, that ability to scan for those elusive details was drawn to a different subject matter altogether. I found myself noticing the twigs that would never be needed for a homemade broom, the leaves that would never offer shelter as a homemade hat, little bits of peeling bark that would never feed a kitchen fire—the things that no one sees or speaks of in a cityscape, if they're even noticed at all.

In lieu of exotic faraway subjects with different customs, clothes or stories, I took up the task of taking portraits of the equally forgotten natural elements. The pockets of my camera bag made room for treasures found on urban walks, and before long, the shelves of my outdoor studio were filled with elements ready to be shot, like forgotten relics of a world unseen in our modern context. I collected old leaves, seedpods, and bags and



bags of bark begging to be peeled from the trees lining my urban neighborhood. And I was determined to shoot them with the same kind of purity and immediacy of my shoots on the African savannah or the mountain villages of Nepal.

That meant no flash, no screens, no tricks with reflectors or milk cartons. Just me, the flora and fauna of my city streets, and the fleeting sun. Just me, the portrait photographer, watching for the just right moment when the light ran across my front porch. Just me, with a bunch of leaves and yard trash basically, seeing if I could allow my eye to make a portrait image that would make the viewer see a pile of twigs with the same kind of pause



that you'd view an indigenous woman.

The first thing to do, after keeping a sharp eye out for my subjects, was to set up the just right portrait studio. For me, the first obvious choice was the old table on my porch where my kids had played as toddlers. Low to ground, the table surface had long ago lost its finish, leaving behind a rough grain of wood—the perfect background for my natural elements. I liked the gritty old feeling of the surface, which added to the possibility that the images I would create could take on a more universal timeless feeling.

Next, came the question of exposure. I knew I wanted images that created texture, depth and emotion—the kind that

came less from shadow and more from a diffuse light source. My porch had a northern exposure, which meant that midmorning or late-afternoon sidelight, obscured by the neighborhood and a backyard treeline, gave me just enough light to play with aperture and ISO, but not so much as to cast unwanted shadows. I noticed that rainy days and the tiniest bit of cloud cover gave the light thrown on my images a matte-like quality. Golden hour shoots close to dusk, the stuff that portraits in the field are made of, didn't work as well for my leaves and twigs, which needed more gravitas to stand alone as singular subjects.

This proved true across the board. I

couldn't shoot a leaf and have it work as a portrait image on the fly, the way I had with my human subjects around the globe. I was used to using conversation and humor to warm up a human subject so the light would shine through their eyes in that natural way, regardless of time of day. To photograph natural subjects, I needed the same kind of connection, but it had to come through a different form of communication. The best way to get into my natural subjects was to take my time, treat them like human subjects and study their intricate details carefully. For me, this meant taking photo after photo, until the subject took on a different quality to my eye.



This also meant looking for light in a different way than I did with my human subjects. The natural elements I photographed had already fallen to the ground; they were no longer living. To do them justice, I had to allude to the life they had had and their enduring history in our ecosystem. Warm light didn't have the same transformative impact as it did on human subjects, unless I chose to shoot the natural subject near the place I had found it, instead of my little porch table. I began to see these shoots like creating small documents of natural history or the way the earth had been in a season quickly passed.

My practice of recording natural elements became an obsession over time. I liked how it challenged me, the way I had been nudged as a beginner photographer, to follow my gut about composition, light and exposure, instead of worrying about technique or gadgets. I liked how much time it took to really see the element I was shooting before I understood how to arrange the image for maximum impact. I shot human portraits less and less, and sought out places in the world where I could explore intimate

natural portraits. The shoreline of the West Coast became a favorite destination, as well as the forests along the Eastern shore.

Now, when I do turn my lens on a friend or a child to capture a human moment important for a personal history, I think of these leaves, twigs, shells and seedpods, as well as this quote by the artist Georgia O'Keeffe: "Nobody sees a flower really; it is so small. We haven't time, and to see takes time—like to have a friend takes time." And I hope I can see people more clearly, because I've spent time in the natural world, which shapes and informs us all, in all of its silent and magnificent wonder. DP

Jen Lemen is an award-winning photographer and nature-based coach working with people in transition. Her images have appeared in The New York Times, the Huffington Post and on PBS.org. In 2008, she won the Name Your Dream Assignment contest, sponsored by Microsoft and Lenovo, which allowed Jen to photograph stories of hope and elemental courage from around the world. She's a coauthor of Expressive Photography: The Shutter Sisters' Guide to Shooting from the Heart and the founder of hopefulworld.org.

TIPS TO GET STARTED SHOOTING NATURE AS PORTRAIT

- **Look down.** So much of what makes the ideal nature portrait is right under your feet. Trees tend to drop twigs, seeds and leaves throughout their cycle of growth, not only in fall.
- **Gather more than you think you need.** Natural items decompose in different ways, making for interesting studies when compared to one another. Notice how the light falls on one versus another. Play until you find one specimen to focus on.
- **Stay close to home, at first.** Shooting nature as portrait can happen whether you live in the country or in a thriving metropolis. Train yourself to see what's alive (and also what's dying) within a stone's throw of where you are right now.
- **Stage your natural subject like you would a human portrait.** Notice what dimensions are identified from different angles, but then focus your attention dead-on. What happens when you take an editorial approach? Shooting from directly above is one way to give your nature subject depth and weight.
- **Focus on texture over shadow.** Often, when photographing people, we look for light and beauty. In this practice, the richness is often found in what's not seemingly pretty on the surface. Learn to trust the edges.

TIME TO GET CONNECTED?

Connected cameras may represent the future of photography. But are they ready for prime time?

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM SAWALICH

The connected camera market launched rather suddenly in 2014 with the arrival of the Sony QX1. A sort of mashup between a lens and a camera, the QX1 attached to a mobile device and used the phone (or tablet) as the brains for image capture and sharing. It might have seemed like a novelty had new products not arrived this year from Sony, as well as Olympus and hardware-newcomer DxO.

Each manufacturer promises vastly superior image quality relative to a mobile device, yet with all the connectivity of that device in a package that's easier to use than a "traditional" camera. I put the three systems to the test to see if they could live up to their promises.



DxO ONE



Olympus AIR A01



Sony DSC-QX30



The French manufacturer DxO may be better known for its digital imaging software suite (which is included gratis with the purchase of the ONE) and its lens sharpness tests on the DxOMark.com site, but the DxO ONE is sure to get DxO noticed in the camera world, too.

Right off the bat, I'm particularly impressed with how easy it is to set up and use the DxO ONE. Sliding open the lens cap turns on the camera and extends the spring-loaded Lightning connector to affix the ONE to an iPhone (and only to an iPhone). Plug in the camera and your phone prompts you to download the DxO ONE app. A minute later, the app is up and running, and before you know it, you're shooting pictures. On-screen navigation is ridiculously easy, and there are prompts for the most crucial stuff. For instance, RAW+JPEG files can be saved to the camera's optional microSD card, while JPEGs are saved to the phone. It prompted me at startup the first time to make sure that's what I wanted to do.

After playing around with the ONE for just an afternoon I was smitten. The image quality is evident even on the phone's screen. This camera clearly improves on the image quality of the iPhone's tiny built-in camera. And it should; it has a 20-megapixel, 1-inch sensor (the same sensor used in the Sony RX100 III) that DxO says provides 10 times the sensitivity of an iPhone 6. It also has a fast $f/1.8$ lens with six elements (and six aperture blades for better bokeh).

The ONE is an elegant device, and the usability is outstanding. Combined with the stellar image quality, you may wonder if there's a catch. Unfortunately, there is. To maximize image quality at every step, and to keep the device as small as possible, a zoom lens just didn't fit into the equation. So that fast $f/1.8$ lens is a prime 32mm (equivalent) lens, which puts some limits on the ONE's versatility. That said,



DxO ONE Features

- Compatible only with iPhones via Apple Lightning connector
- 20.2-megapixel, 1-inch CMOS sensor
- RAW (DNG) and JPEG
- 32mm equivalent $f/1.8$ prime lens with 6-bladed aperture
- ISO range from 100-51,200
- Shutter speeds from 1/8000 to 15 seconds
- 1080p Full HD video mode
- Focuses as close as 8 inches
- Built-in Lithium-ion battery
- Dimensions: 2.7x1.9x1 inches
- Weight: 3.8 oz.
- Street Price: \$600

dxo.com

because the RAW file size is large and the image quality is so good, the crop-to-zoom approach can make up for a lack of focal length.

This camera isn't just for people who want to share photos quickly; it's for photographers who want to share really sharp and beautiful photos quickly, and for people who really want to shoot in low light, or even incredibly low light. A layman may not see the difference in image quality in daylight landscape images, for instance, but someone who's serious about image quality surely will—especially in low-light shooting, where the DxO ONE really shines.

Serious users will be intrigued by the Super RAW setting, which would be more accurately called "extreme low light" mode. The camera uses four exposures and combines them in post in the DxO Connect software (eventually in Apple Photos and Adobe Lightroom, as well). It's for use when the camera is mounted to a tripod, which can be done with a third-party mount.

Because it's connected to the iPhone (and, by extension, the Internet), the



camera gets regular updates and improvements. One day you'll pick it up and your camera will just be better. (An update, not available at press time, will allow RAW burst shooting at 8 fps up to 16 or 20 frames.)

The DxO ONE really feels and functions like a traditional camera in that regard. And it's a pretty powerful unit, especially given how small it is. Just a bit bigger than most key fobs, the ONE actually was easy to carry around in the same pocket that holds my iPhone.

It's small, with a 750 mAh built-in battery, so DxO designers were serious about conserving energy to maximize battery life. After about a minute, the camera goes into power-saving mode. This could be seen as a bother, but a simple tap of the screen or touch of the shutter button wakes the camera very quickly.

Bottom line: The DxO ONE is super-high quality and easy to use, but the lack of a zoom or telephoto option is a bummer.

Olympus AIR A01



Olympus AIR A01 Features

- Compatible with both iOS and Android devices
- Micro Four Thirds lens mount
- 16-megapixel Micro Four Thirds sensor
- RAW (ORF)+JPEG or JPEG only
- ISO range from 100-12,800
- Shutter speeds from 1/16,000 to 4 seconds
- 10 fps continuous shooting up to 23 frames
- 1080p Full HD video mode
- Built-in battery
- Dimensions: 2.25x2.25x1.75 inches
- Weight: 5.2 oz. (body only)
- Street Price: \$300 (body only); \$500 (with 14-42mm lens)

getolympus.com

My initial impression of the Olympus AIR A01, I must confess, wasn't great. Opening the box, you're confronted by what seems like a dozen different pieces. It turns out this is because the A01 is modular. The device that contains the sensor and the shutter release connects to a phone clamp on one end and sports an Olympus lens mount at the other—meaning you can use any of the 20 or so M.ZUIKO Digital lenses on your smartphone. That's pretty great.

The camera body shares the cylindrical shape of a lens. If you're already an Olympus shooter, with a wide range of lenses, the A01 makes a whole lot of sense. You're buying not so much a standalone point-and-shoot as you're buying another Micro Four Thirds camera body to fit into your system. This one happens to connect to your Android or iOS smartphone via WiFi and Bluetooth (to provide a more stable connection).

When you consider the creative avenues this setup avails, things get pretty interesting. For instance, if you thought having a rotating LCD viewfinder was cool, you're really going to love having a big, beautiful viewfinder that can totally disconnect from the camera and lens.

One of the most impressive aspects of the Olympus AIR A01 is that it's an open-platform camera. It may not mean much in practice for the average photographer, but Olympus has made the OPC Hack & Make Project a vehicle for creative photographers, designers, engineers and developers to tap into the creative possibilities of the AIR A01 as not only a camera, but also as a device they're welcome to modify freely. Anything goes with the open platform, and it's certainly exciting to see a major manufacturer create a system that embraces the "maker" sensibility. Perhaps the AIR A01 will evolve more quickly because of the OPC approach.

As much as I enjoy the camera, I do have some pet peeves. The biggest is how unintuitive it is to figure out how to use the thing right out of the box. I was surprised I had to



practically take apart the device in order to install a microSD memory card. And, once shooting, you have to repeat much of that "disassembly" process in order to switch from horizontal to vertical orientation.

In terms of usability, once you click Mode Dial, there are a few seconds of delay while the camera gets ready to shoot. This delay can feel like an eternity, depending upon what's happening in front of the camera. It's this lag—present in all connected cameras I've tested—that, to me, represents the biggest fundamental difference between a connected camera and a traditional point-and-shoot. If you're in a big hurry to pull out your camera and fire away, smartphone camera devices will test your patience.

I found adjusting exposure, white balance and ISO to be quick and easy via the A01's on-screen display. And the A01's ORF RAW files look great; the image quality is beautiful, though it's not as great in low light as the DxO ONE.



Sony DSC-QX30



When I first picked up the Sony DSC-QX30, I instantly realized that not all connected cameras are targeting the same audience. Whereas the DxO ONE is for serious image-quality addicts who won't miss a zoom lens, the QX30 is practically the opposite; it's for those who want a huge zoom range, but don't need any better image quality than what they already have with their phones. The camera sports a 20-megapixel sensor, but it's a small sensor that outputs only JPEG image files.

This camera has a whopping 30x zoom. That's an equivalent of 24-720mm—a massive range. For anyone used to simply turning on their camera and shooting immediately, dealing with any amount of wireless setup is a pain. Worse, every time I connected the camera, I had to visit my phone's settings in order to point it to the camera's previously established WiFi connection. This is the fundamental reason why regular point-and-shoot users won't yet love the connected camera experience: Most don't function as fast as a typical point-and-shoot.

Since the camera connects over WiFi, there's also sometimes a bit of WiFi lag between exposure and preview. I didn't notice a problematic delay between pressing the button and releasing the shutter, but after

that you're out of commission for a few seconds while the camera processes and displays the image file. Again, for shooters who can take their time, this is likely no problem.

About the size and heft of a typical DSLR medium zoom or fast prime 85mm lens, the QX30 is solidly built. The camera clips onto the phone (which can be an iPhone or Android device) pretty easily, though it takes a bit to figure out exactly how to hold it. Like all of these connected cameras, the shutter can be triggered from the app on-screen or from a physical button on the device. This leads to some accidental exposures, as well as a bit of trial and error until you find a method of handholding that makes sense to you.

Did I mention the QX30 has a huge 30x zoom range? It's seriously amazing. That 24-720mm equivalent range opens up creative possibilities that most other cameras just can't replicate. For instance, on a nature hike, I found myself in a stretch of woods with dappled light reflecting off of a



small pool of water. With a wide or normal lens, the scene was ho-hum. But zoomed in beyond 600mm, I could cut through the clutter and find a beautiful little abstraction in the reflected light in the water. It's a shot I simply couldn't have seen, much less made, with another compact camera, connected or not. That alone should make the QX30 appealing to wildlife and sports photographers who never have enough focal length. With this camera, they're sure to have it to spare.

Sony DSC-QX30 Features

- Compatible with both iOS and Android devices
- 30X optical zoom lens (24-720mm equivalent)
- f/3.5-6.3 variable maximum aperture
- Optical image stabilization
- Focuses as close as 1.9 inches
- 20.4-megapixel, 1/2.3-inch Exmor CMOS sensor
- JPEG only
- Lock-on AF
- 10 fps continuous shooting up to 10 frames
- 1080p Full HD video mode, including 60p
- ISO range from 80-12,800
- Shutter speeds from 1/1600 to 4 seconds
- Removable, rechargeable battery
- Dimensions: 2.7x2.6x2.3 inches
- Weight: 6.8 oz. (with battery)
- Street Price: \$350

store.sony.com

THE VERDICT

Before I touched a connected camera, my thinking was that they might signal the death knell for pocket point-and-shoots. What I learned, though, is that on functionality alone, connected cameras don't rival conventional cameras—at least not yet. Don't get me wrong: They're really fun, and each has some impressive qualities, but the average point-and-shooter is likely to be happier with their plain old point-and-shoot.

That's largely a function of the cumbersome process of connecting the camera to the phone every time you want to take a picture.

In the grand scheme of things, the process isn't bad at all. But when compared with snapshot cameras that are powered up with the push of a button and ready to shoot immediately, connected cameras are still too slow.

Connected photographers, though—those who use Instagram and Flickr and

Twitter, and generally make strongest use of the “sharing” aspects of digital photography—are likely to love connected cameras. Ultimately, I think connected cameras are less like standalone point-and-shoots and more like exceptionally powerful smartphone accessories. Their usefulness is inseparable from their connectedness. If you're not going to take advantage of that connectedness, you'll probably be happier with a dumb old disconnected camera. DP

THE **Digital Photo** 2015

SPORTS & LEISURE

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Whether you capture images of people seeking a thrill or looking to chill, submit your best sports and leisure photography for your chance to win prizes and get published in *Digital Photo* magazine.

dpmag.com/sportsandleisure

BEFORE



AFTER



FREQUENCY SEPARATION IS EASY!

This powerful skin-retouching Photoshop technique doesn't have to be daunting

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY **WILLIAM SAWALICH**

Frequency separation is a powerful retouching technique for improving a portrait subject's skin quality without the risk of looking overly retouched. You know what an overly retouched portrait looks like, right? The subject's face seems nice and clear, but when you look a little closer, it appears their skin tone has been sprayed on with paint or perhaps obliterated by blur. The only thing worse than a non-retouched portrait, in my opinion, is one that has been retouched with a heavy hand.

While frequency separation may be a high-end technique used by professional retouchers working on beauty ads and fashion magazine covers, it's actually quite straightforward and easy to do.

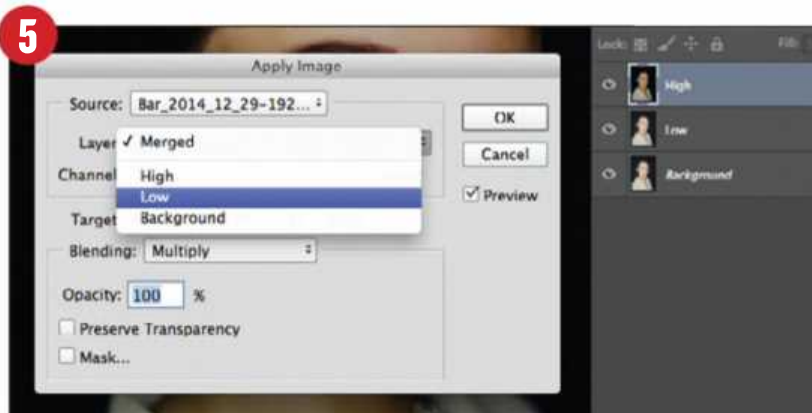
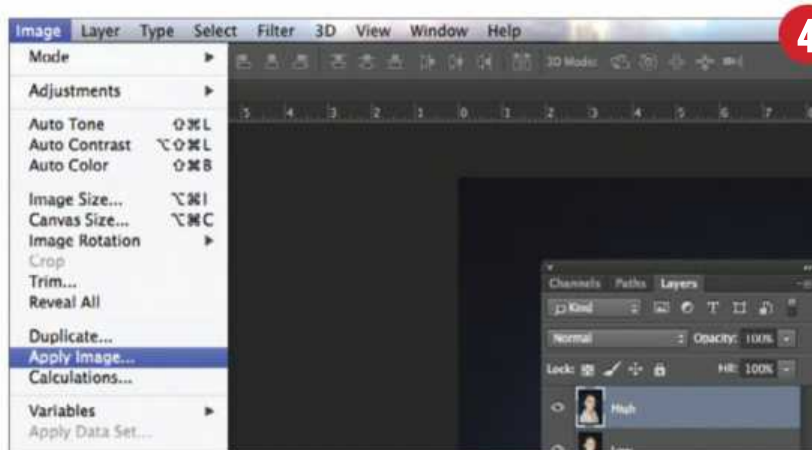
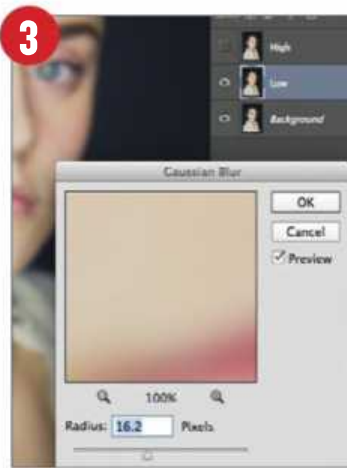
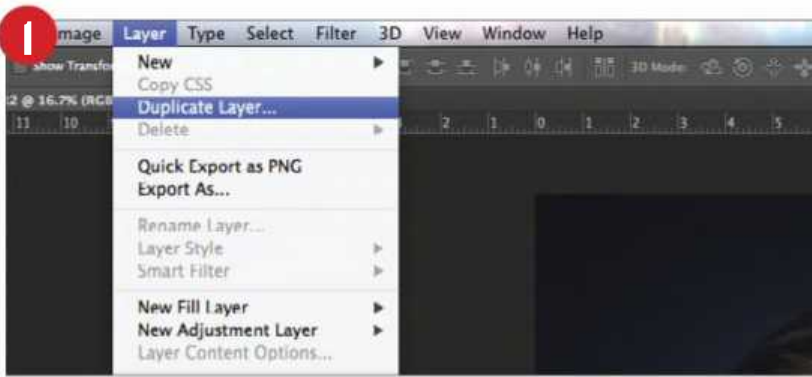
HOW IT WORKS

The beauty of frequency separation is that it separates a face into two components: the "low" frequency tonal values (shadows, highlights and colors) and the "high" frequency details (the texture of skin pores, blemishes and wrinkles). To start, duplicate the

background twice. Name the first layer "Low" and the second one "High."

With the Low layer active, use the Gaussian Blur filter (found under the Blur heading of the Filter menu) to remove the detail on the Low layer. You want the filter strong enough to eliminate details of skin texture, but not so strong that the whole image becomes unrecognizable. Less is more, for sure.

Next, click on the High layer to make it active, then choose Apply Image from the Image menu. On the resulting pop-up window, click on the dropdown menu next to Layer and select Low.

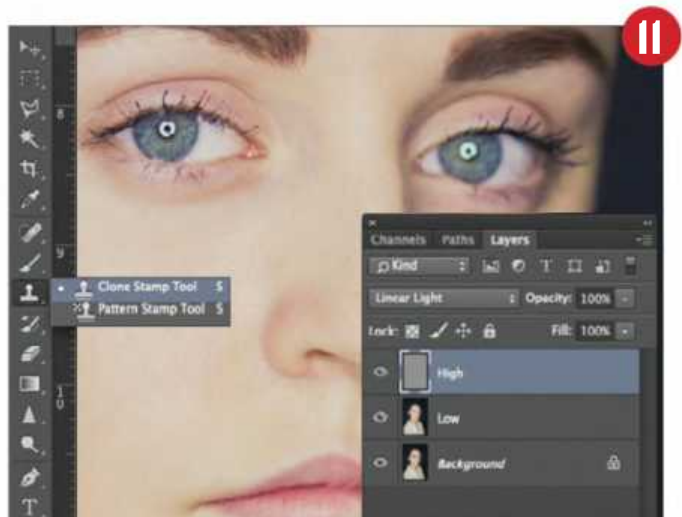
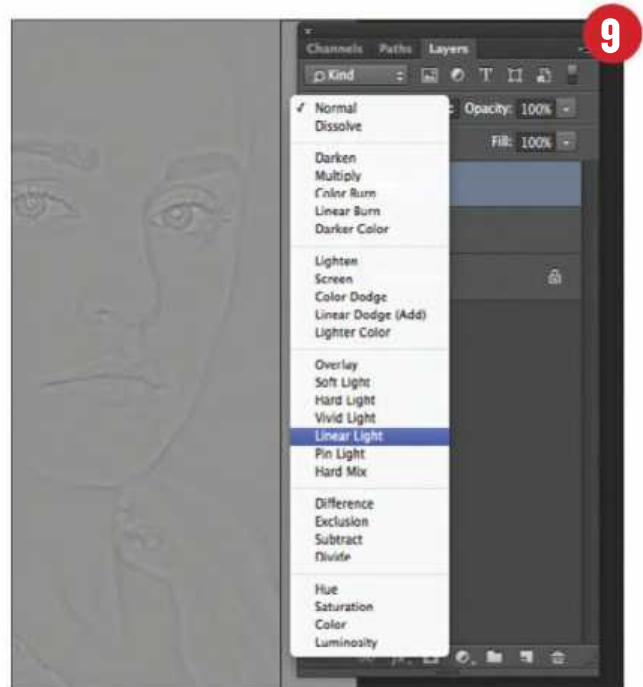
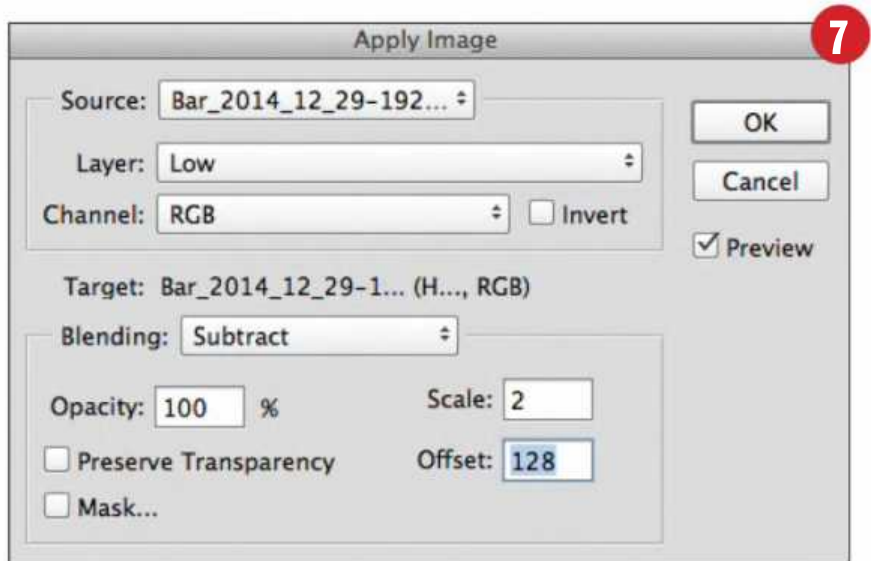
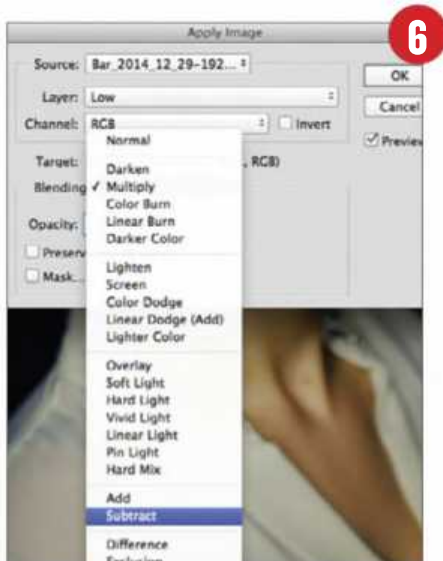


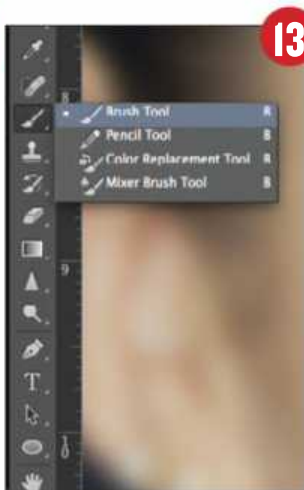
Then change the blending mode to Subtract. Lastly, make sure the scale is set to 2 and the offset to 128. (The “why” behind these numbers involves a ton of math. Suffice it to say, these settings are key to distributing the total values correctly to achieve the desired result.)

The resulting image will look a lot like the effect of a High Pass filter: middle gray, with subtle lines and details outlining the edges of contrast within the image. To make it look more normal—in fact, to turn it back to looking exactly like it did when you started—set the High layer’s mode to Linear Light. This effectively creates the original image again, because the combination of the High and Low layers with the Linear Light mode isolates whatever details were eliminated with the Gaussian Blur on the Low layer and puts those details alone on the High layer. You’ve just separated the color and tones on the Low layer from the details and textures on the High layer. That’s a huge help for powerful, high-quality retouching, which you now can begin.

Before we begin the actual retouching, consider that the steps above are repeated the same way every time you prepare an image for frequency separation retouching. That means this series of instructions is ripe for streamlining with a Photoshop Action. Lots has been written on creating Actions, but know that it’s fairly simple and straightforward: you simply press Record on a new Action, then run through the setup steps above, and click Stop when you’re done. The Action then will play with a single click and turn any image into the layered variation with the texture and tones separated onto different layers, ready for retouching.

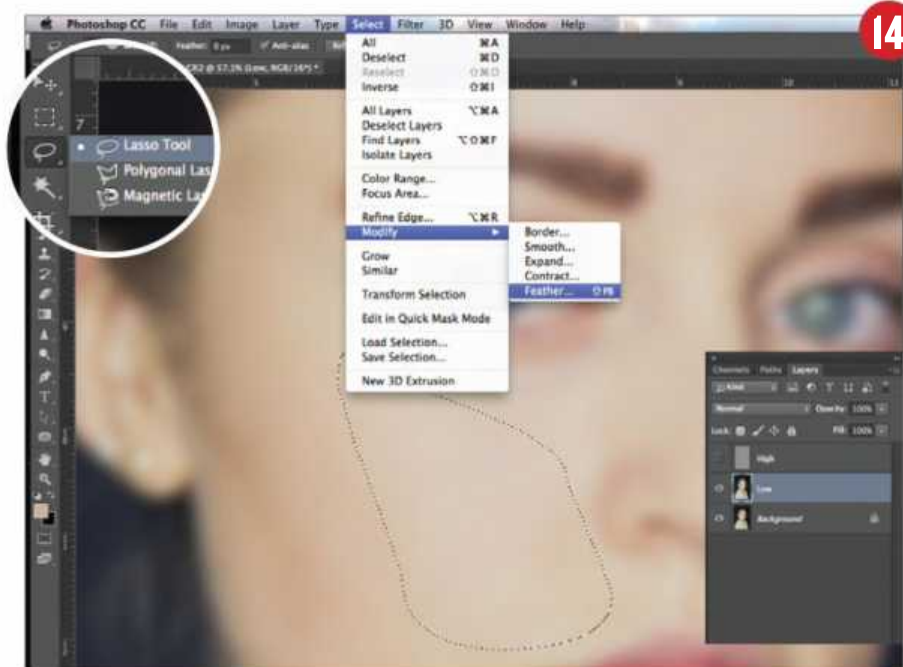
For the actual retouching, I start with the High layer and a Clone Stamp tool. Yes, you can use a Spot Healing brush to eliminate the prominent textures of wrinkles, whiskers and blemishes, but I find that the Clone Stamp works better because it replaces a bad texture (a blemish) with a good texture (normal pores). After a once-over, I like to click off the viewability of the Low layer in order to see the exaggerated texture produced by the High layer over the original background layer. This is a helpful way to see even the smallest wrinkles and blemishes





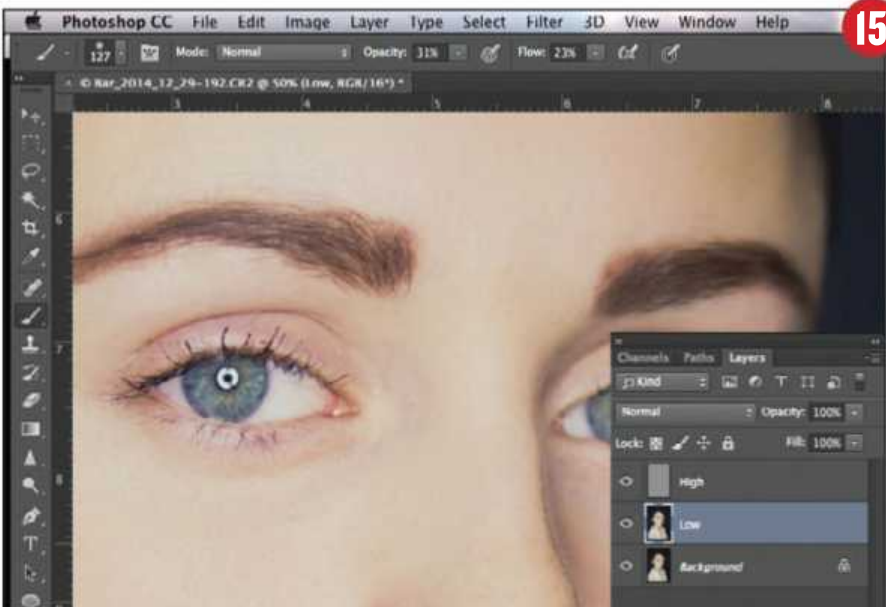
as they're amplified before your eyes.

Once I'm satisfied that the High layer is fairly free of unappealing textures, I turn my attention to the Low layer. Clicking the layer to make it active, I then choose the Brush tool. I can make spot-color fixes this way by using a large, soft brush set to a very low opacity and flow (about 25% each). Alt-clicking on a pleasing skin tone establishes that color in the foreground palette, and painting with the brush then applies that tone to the Low layer. This is a great way to eliminate any imperfections from discoloration, shadows or just blotchy skin.



The more profound way to improve skin tones, though, is to use the Lasso tool to select large swaths of skin—say, the cheek, the chin or the forehead. With an area roughly outlined with a selection, you then want to modify the selection by feathering it, about 50 pixels or so.

With an area selected and the edge of that selection feathered, you can type Command (or Ctrl) F to apply the last filter, which is the Gaussian Blur. (You also can find this command right at the top of the Filter menu.) I repeat this process on various planes of the face—chin, forehead, cheek—each time selecting, feathering and blurring. This, too, is an ideal opportunity to record a Photoshop Action; it even could be tied to a function key so your process becomes even simpler. For instance, draw a Lasso selection and hit F5 to feather and blur all at once.



Once you're satisfied that the texture has been removed from the High layer, and any discolorations or unappealing tonalities are eliminated from the Low layer, your retouching is complete. When you examine your finished image next to the unmodified original, it likely will be easy to see which image has been beautifully retouched. It's all the more impressive that, once the High and Low layers have been established, the retouching is done with simple tools such as the Lasso and the Clone Stamp. That's why frequency separation is so powerful, and still so easy to do.

DP

Photographic Lessons In The Internet Era

Photographers once had to toil as apprentices in order to learn their skills. Today, the Internet provides more resources than any photographer could wish for.

BY JULIA APARICIO

Mastering photography is a lifelong endeavor, one that's constantly evolving and changing as new technology emerges. However, the Internet has altered the landscape for learning about photography, as well as understanding the newest techniques and technological advances that are available for both beginners and seasoned veterans.

Back in the day, photographers had to learn their trade as an apprentice or an assistant, or by going to school for photography. While those avenues still hold value, today you also can find online classes and tutorials that provide a wide variety of resources at little to no cost, allowing you to improve your skills within your budget and at your own pace. Here's a selection of some of the best online learning sites.

GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND TECHNIQUE

CREATIVELIVE

CreativeLive, a live-streaming education website, offers online photography classes taught by first-rate instructors. These classes span across all skill levels, ranging from courses such as "Photoshop 101," which highlights some of the most important basics of Photoshop, like enhancing and correcting your photos, all the way to advanced techniques for "Real World Lighting," a course that features instruction on colored lighting effects and on-location composition. The majority of classes are broadcast live from one of four in-house production studios, and all are available to stream online. Cost: Free.

creativelive.com/photography

KELBYONE

KelbyOne offers expert-taught online photography courses and tutorials for both amateurs and pros. The site includes an algorithm when choosing courses, which allows photographers to choose a skillset and specific interest, as well as the equipment they're intending to use. Courses range from broad to specific, including such titles as "Active Lifestyle Photography" and "Retouching Brides." Aside from photography courses, KelbyOne also offers instruction in Photoshop, Lightroom and design. Cost: \$19.99/per month or \$199/per year. Group memberships are available for schools, businesses and government agencies.

kelbyone.com/advanced-search/

LYNDA.COM

At Lynda.com, photographers can choose from an extensive video library, containing hundreds of online photography courses taught by industry experts. A 10-day free trial allows unlimited access to everything in the catalog. Some of the most popular titles included in the 25,937 available video tutorials are "Foundations of Photography: Exposure," which explores camera modes and lighting techniques, as well as "Photoshop Essential Training," which covers the entire spectrum of Photoshop basics in order to use the photo-editing program efficiently and effectively. Cost: \$25/per month or \$240/per year for a basic membership plan.

lynda.com/Photography-training-tutorials/70-0.html?bmr=NMHP_blocks

PHOTOGRAPHYCOURSE.NET

This free photography resource provides lessons for photographers of all skill levels. PhotographyCourse.net organizes their resources into topics like "Camera Settings" and "Advanced Photography," with multiple lessons in each course. "Advanced Photography," for example, includes tutorials in sports photography, the use of gray cards and neutral-density filters, and wildlife photography tips. The site also has an online camera store, as well as a blog dedicated to a wide range of useful topics and tips spanning all aspects of photography techniques and equipment. Cost: Free, with paid classes coming.

photographycourse.net



UDEMY.COM

Udemy.com provides a place for experts in any field to create courses available to the public for no cost or for a tuition fee. Photography classes are categorized under a large variety of topics, including photography fundamentals, mobile photography, photography tools and video design. Courses range in price; for example, "Master Adobe Lightroom Fast," a two-hour class on how to learn to use and edit your photos with Lightroom, is offered for free, while the top student pick, "Photography Masterclass: Your Complete Guide to Photography," is six hours long and costs \$297. All of the classes range in skill level and time length, and offer a free preview before enrolling. Cost: Free or tuition fee.

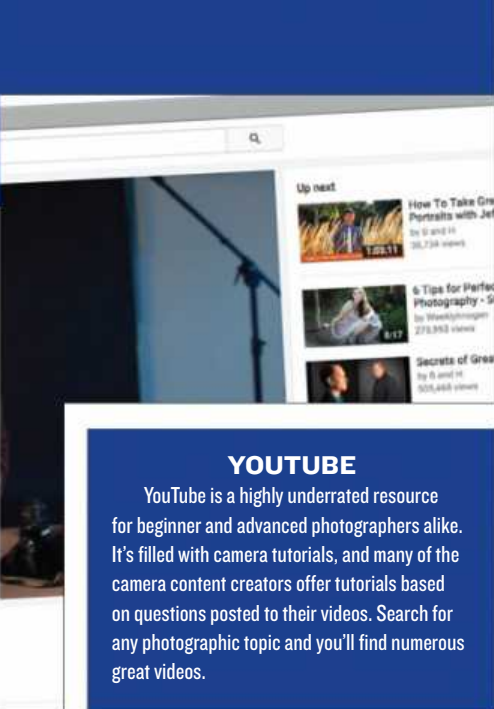
udemy.com/courses/search/?q=photography

PHOTOSHOP AND LIGHTROOM

ADOBE KNOWHOW

Sometimes the best way to learn is to go right to the source. Adobe KnowHow offers a free "Beginners Adobe Photoshop" course with tutorials to learn the fundamentals of Photoshop. The total duration of the course is 13 hours and 31 minutes, with 26 individual sections that include such topics as "Cropping and Straightening" and "Image Size and Resolution." The course is entertainingly narrated by a character named Andy, and allows photographers to learn helpful techniques at their own pace. Adobe KnowHow also offers an advanced tutorial guide, "Master Adobe Photoshop CC: A Definitive Guide," for Photoshop users who want to take their skill to the next level. This guide is structured similarly to the beginner's guide, but covers a wider spectrum of more advanced topics. Price: Free and \$39, respectively.

adobeknowhow.com/courselanding/beginners-adobe-photoshop#



YOUTUBE

YouTube is a highly underrated resource for beginner and advanced photographers alike. It's filled with camera tutorials, and many of the camera content creators offer tutorials based on questions posted to their videos. Search for any photographic topic and you'll find numerous great videos.

KELBYTV

Photoshop User TV, which is presented by KelbyOne, provides a weekly TV show featuring "The Photoshop Guys," Scott Kelby, Corey Barker, Pete Collins and RC Concepcion. These humorous, informative videos cover a range of topics related to Photoshop, including "Cloud Brush and Classic Photo Tricks," which features beginner tips for using Cloud Brush and thorough advice on retouching, and "Lighting and Effects for Portraits," which focuses on attractive lighting for portraits and wedding photography. Cost: Free.

Another resource from Kelby TV, the Lightroom Show, follows Scott Kelby and RC Concepcion as they provide tips and techniques for using Adobe Lightroom. Cost: Free.

kelbytv.com/photoshopusertv/
kelbytv.com/thelightroomshow/

OPENLEARNING.COM

Online educational technology company OpenLearning.com offers a free "Photoshop Training & Tutorials" course, which consists of over 90 video tutorials covering beginner and advanced lessons. Topics include Photoshop, Lightroom and Bridge, as well as Camera Raw. Examples of tutorials taught within this course include separate lessons on hair, lip and skin retouching, and how to use Photoshop to create haze and a blurred filter in your photographs. Cost: Free.

openlearning.com/courses/Photoshop#jointhecourse

TUTS+

Tuts+ provides a large variety of online tutorials, including photography and photo-editing courses. The site offers an extensive list of Adobe Lightroom tutorials for all skill levels, and covers technological and conceptual ideas. Some of the classes available include "How to Reduce Noise in Pictures with Adobe Photoshop Lightroom," "Direct to Desktop: Camera Tethering in Adobe Photoshop Lightroom" and "24 Essential Daily

Keyboard Shortcuts in Adobe Photoshop Lightroom." Cost: Free for access to 48 full-length courses; \$15/per month for access to all 610 courses; \$180/per year for full access; or \$360 for Yearly Pro, which includes a \$25 credit for Envato Market and a \$25 credit for Envato Studio.

tutsplus.com

CAMERA EQUIPMENT

CAMBRIDGE IN COLOUR

Based in the United Kingdom, photography website Cambridge in Colour offers a variety of useful learning tools for all levels of photography enthusiasts, plus an interactive learning forum that allows users to post their photography quandaries. The site boasts a comprehensive list of tutorial guides on equipment, concepts and terminology, as well as photography techniques and styles, among others. These tutorials are focused more for beginners, with such titles as "Understanding Camera Lenses" and "Using Camera Shutter Speed Creatively." Cost: Free.

cambridgeincolour.com/tutorials.htm

MANUFACTURERS

Many manufacturers provide excellent tutorials on their websites; here are some of the most notable.

B&H

Although B&H isn't a manufacturer, they have a huge amount of content, and under the "Explora" tab on the homepage, you'll find a range of helpful news, tips and

product reviews. These include a variety of buyer's guides for new and trending products, as well as videos with tips to help improve your photography. Cost: Free.
bhphotovideo.com/explora/

CANON

Canon features a number of resources on their website, including a range of workshops, their CDLC Blog, which teaches new techniques, with insider tips, and a new video series that features Canon technical advisors.

Cost: Free; workshop prices vary.

learn.usa.canon.com/home/home.shtml

ELINCHROM

Lighting company Elinchrom provides an in-depth blog, with articles, interviews, reviews and behind-the-scenes looks, as well as access to a variety of workshops that take place all over the world. Cost: Free; workshop prices vary.

elinchrom.com

NIKON

The "Learn & Explore" tab on the Nikon homepage includes a glossary of general terms, as well as a list of Nikon photography workshops in your area. Cost: Free; workshop prices vary.

nikonusa.com

OLYMPUS

On the Olympus homepage, you'll find a "Learn & Share" tab, which offers photography tips, an image share app and an "Ask Olympus" page that includes real questions from Olympus owners answered by product experts.

Cost: Free.

getolympus.com

THE MAC GROUP

The MAC Group site is the U.S. distributor for 20 product lines. Most of these have an educational section, with each providing informative videos and articles under the "Learning Center" tab of their homepage. You'll also find the TeamBowens blog, where you can learn directly from experts. Cost: Free.
bowensusa.com; macgroupus.com

Go Wild!

MAKE YOUR WILDLIFE PARK PICTURES LOOK LIKE *OUT OF AFRICA* IMAGES

BY RICK SAMMON

An African photo safari is a dream come true for wildlife photographers. Not all wildlife photographers, however, have the time or the funds to make that dream come true. Still following their love for wildlife photography, photographers who can't make the trek to Africa enjoy photographing at wildlife parks. With some creative composition techniques and digital darkroom skills, these captive-animal photos can look as though they were taken on safari. Let's take a look at a few creative options.

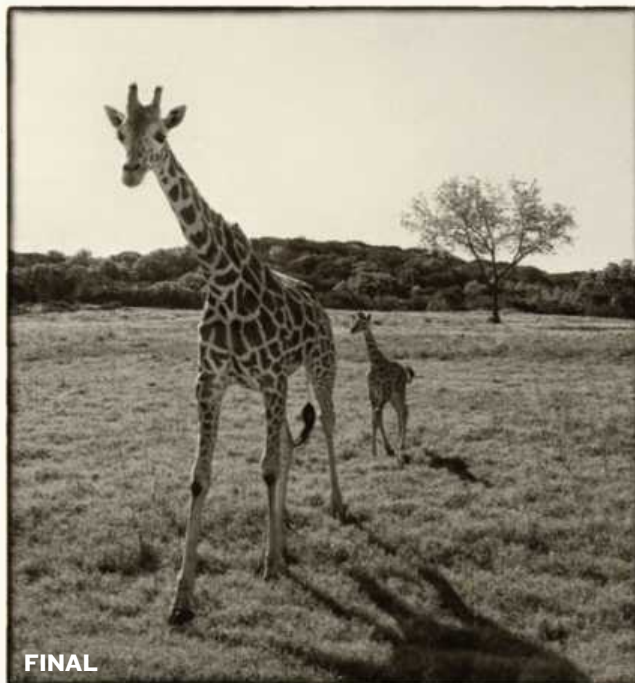
I created the opening image for



this column from the photograph below (basically, a snapshot), which I took at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Glen Rose, Texas. You can tell it was taken in a wildlife park because you can see the telephone pole and telephone wires in the background. Also, the green grass doesn't give the feeling that the photograph was taken in Africa.

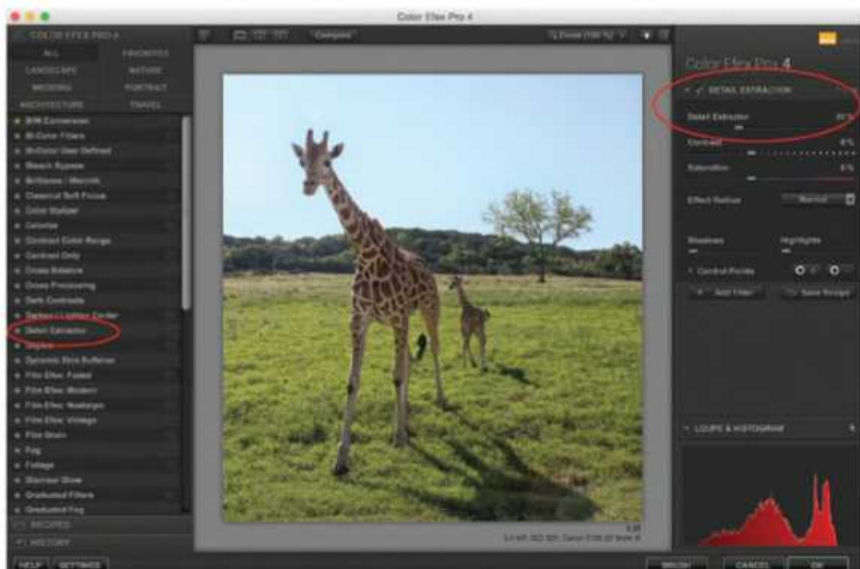
My first step was to crop the image. By cropping out the boring parts of the photo, I created an image with more impact, and I like images with impact. Next, I cloned out the telephone pole and wires.

The light isn't always ideal when shooting in wildlife parks, which usually open well after sunrise and close before sunset. On an African safari, you're up before dawn and stay out until dark. My photograph has fairly strong



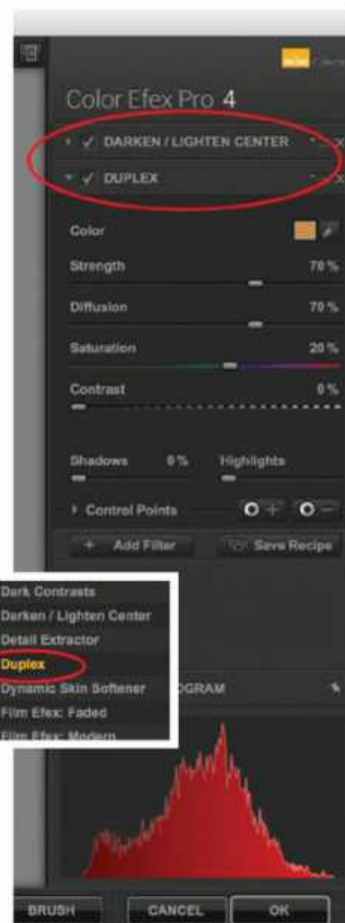
backlight, so some of the details on the giraffes were lost in the shadows. To fix that, I used the Detail Extractor filter in Nik Color Efex Pro, a Lightroom/Photoshop plug-in (below, left). When using Detail Extractor, you can control the amount of detail you want to extract. Don't overdo it, or the shadow areas of your photograph will look pixelated.

When we remove some of the color from a scene, we remove some of the reality, which can result in a more creative image, an image with a different mood or feeling. To remove the true color of the scene, and to create an image that looks as though it was taken on an African safari in the time of Hemingway, I used a Yellow 2 filter and Image Border Type 7 in Nik Silver Efex Pro (below, right).





In most wildlife parks, some of the animals are behind wire fences, which was the case when I photographed these cheetahs at Fossil Rim. However, you can't tell, because I photographed the animals with a telephoto lens (Canon EF 200-400mm IS at the 400mm setting) set at a wide aperture ($f/5.6$), and held the lens very close to an opening in the fence. At that position, the fence was so out of focus, it disappeared—in the foreground.



Here's a portion of my original image (above, left). Although the fence was blurred in the foreground, you can see the lines created by the chain-link fence in the background. To blur the fence in the background, I used Photoshop's Blur Tool on that part of the image. You can do that in Lightroom, too. Next, to add a soft touch to the entire image, again removing some of the reality, I used the Duplex filter. Finally, I used the Darken/Lighten Center filter in Nik Color Efex Pro to darken the edges of the frame, which draws more interest to the main subjects.



My guess is that if I didn't tell you, you'd think this photograph (right) was taken on one of my African photo-to-safari workshops. Truth is, I made the image, a composite, on one of my Fossil Rim photo workshops.



Here are the two images (left) from which I made my composite. Basically, I cut and pasted the animal (the same animal, by the way) from one image into another. After a bit of cloning (to remove the wires in the background) and resizing (I used Photoshop's Edit > Transform > Scale adjustment to shrink the animal that's looking away from the camera), I had a more interesting photograph, but a photograph with boring color.

To add an African sunset look to the image, I used the Orange Graduated filter in Nik Color Efex Pro and then applied the Darken/Lighten Center filter (far right). That filter combination created a natural-looking sunset because, as with a real sunset, the light gradually darkens from where the sun is setting.

Well, my friends, I hope you can make it to Africa someday, but if you can't, you can still have a ton of fun photographing in wildlife parks and processing your images at home. DP



RICK SAMMON is a longtime friend of this magazine. Learn more from Rick on his website: ricksammon.com.



JEFF JONES

Happy Holidays from everyone at *Digital Photo!*

"Backcountry Bliss," shot at Loveland Pass in Summit County, Colorado, by photographer Jeff Jones, shows the beauty of the first tracks on the slopes after a powder morning.

Sony Alpha A58, f/5.6 at 160mm, 1/3200 sec., ISO 200

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